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ABSTRACT

Defining structuralism as an unannounced aesthetic movement that involves not only the theatre but all arts, this journal issue focuses on structuralist performance. The nine articles provide information on the following topics: the French theatre group, Atelier Theatre et Musique; "Tell Me," a play by Guy de Cointet; patterning in "Five Shaggy-Dog Operas," by Tom Johnson; David Gordon's "What Happened"; Jim Neu's "Him or Me"; the English Theatre of Mistakes; structural film in retrospect; turning structuralist plays into structuralist films; and the mystery plays of Michael Kirby. (FL)

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The Drama Review

Structuralist Performance Issue

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Structuralist Performance Issue

An Introduction

This was originally planned as an issue on Structuralist/Semiotics. We thought that examples of structuralist performances and semiotic analyses of non-structuralist productions would complement each other in meaningful ways. When the material came in, we found that there was too much for one issue, so we decided to postpone the analytical pieces, which will make a section in our next issue. Thus T84 will be devoted to both Private Performance—unadvertised presentations done for closed groups or invited audiences—and Semiotic Analysis.

By labeling as "structuralist" the performances described in this issue, we are not suggesting a movement in the sociological sense that Futurism, for example, was a movement. While the Futurist artists proclaimed themselves Futurist, most of the people whose work is discussed here do not consider themselves structuralists. Many would probably reject the categorization. Thus, from one point of view, the theme of this issue has no more significance than that of our other issues. *The Drama Review* feels that by grouping articles dealing with a particular subject area and/or with related ideas, one article—merely because of its context and in addition to its particular inherent content—reflects upon, complements, sets off, and illucidates another. This factor of implicit cross-reference would not be possible in a general issue that juxtaposed unrelated articles.

In another sense, however, structuralism can be seen as an esthetic movement involving not only theatre but all the arts. It is in this esthetic, rather than sociological, sense that Expressionism, for example, became a movement. The name unaccepted by most of the artists involved, was coined by critics and analysts. It was useful and became popular. In the same way, structuralist thinking seems to be fundamental to much of the art of our time. Terms such as "Futurism" and "Expressionism" are important, in part, because they extend across esthetic disciplines and refer to common intentions, qualities, and characteristics. The same is true of Structuralism. As an unannounced movement it can be seen in poetry, music, sculpture, painting, dance, film, drama, and other performances. It even appears in advertising and commercial graphics—as exemplified in some of the layout in this and other issues of *The Drama Review.*

The presentations described in this Structuralist Performance issue exhibit a wide range of styles. At one level, they are quite different from each other. Each projects the personal esthetic concerns of the individual artist and is, in that sense, unique. Yet they resemble each other in certain important ways. We feel that the reader will recognize the general approach that each shares and will recognize why each, to some extent, may be referred to as structuralist (a description) even if the artists themselves would reject classification as Structuralist (the member of an esthetic movement).

M.K.

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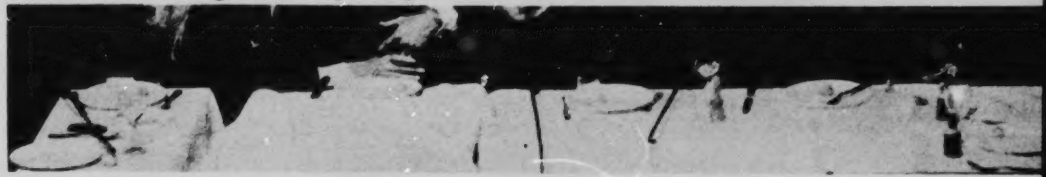
Atelier Théâtre et Musique

Structuring Everyday Gestures and Sounds



by Theodore Shank

The French theatre group ATEM (Atelier Théâtre et Musique) was formed by composer Georges Aperghis in the fall of 1975 to begin explorations that would lead to a series of productions in which commonplace gestures and sounds are scored according to musical principles. The group has developed what Aperghis calls a "grammar" consisting of "systems" that provide a means of structuring fragments of everyday life, setting them off in such a way that the spectator perceives them afresh rather than ignoring them as commonplace.

Five actor-musicians, together with Aperghis, comprise the entire group, taking on all of the research, administrative, technical, and performance responsibilities. They are subsidized in part by the city of Bagnolet, a bedroom suburb of Paris with a population of 36,000, and have attempted to relate their work to everyday life in the community. It is remarkable that they have been able to develop a form for their work uniquely different from that of other groups seeking a community involvement. They maintain an active relationship with community organizations through workshops, mini-performances, discussions, and improvisations, all of which serve as part of the research of the group.

Work on *San Paroles (Without Words)* began in 1978 with acute observation of Bagnolet residents at a cafe—the gestures that they made, facial expressions, their nonverbal sounds, and the words they frequently spoke. Certain of these gestures, sounds, and words were chosen and structured according to one of the "systems" that are part of the "grammar" developed by Aperghis and the group. These fragments of cafe behavior become the "words," and several of these "words" comprise a "sentence." The "words" and "sentences" are scored according to a "system." The score for *Sans Paroles,* and a later version set in a self-service restaurant called *Métode pratique pour se perdre (Practical Method for Losing One's Way),* is performed as a round *(en canon).* Each element in the score below is precisely determined in advance except the "Free Gestures" which are left entirely to the improvisation of the actors. "Gesture 1," for example, is exactly the same gesture each time it appears in the score. Each line of the score is a "sentence."

A) Gesture 1
B) Gesture 1/Sound 1
C) Gesture 1/Sound 1/Phrase 1
D) Gesture 1/Sound 1/Free Gesture/Gesture 2
E) Gesture 1/Sound 1/Phrase 1/Gesture 2/Sound 2
F) Gesture 1/Sound 1/Free Gesture/Gesture 2/Sound 2/Phrase 2
G) Gesture 1/Sound 1/Free Gesture/Gesture 2/Sound 2/Phrase 2/Gesture 3 etc...

Actor No. 1 performs sentence A alone.
When Actor No. 1 begins sentence B,
    Actor No. 2 begins sentence A.
When Actor No. 1 begins sentence C,
    Actor No. 2 begins sentence B,
    Actor No. 3 begins sentence A.

And so on, each actor staggered by one "word" in relation to his predecessor. The only sounds and movements in the performance are those indicated in the score, and they are performed with precise timing and in the predetermined order.

When I saw the performance the audience sat in a circle around three cafe tables with chairs. On each table was a bottle of fruit juice and glasses, a plate of potato chips, a plate of cold meats and tomato slices. The performers sat at the tables with their feet in either a small box of gravel or a pan of water or on a short board that could be rocked back and forth. The sounds included eating potato chips, scraping feet in the gravel, slushing water with the feet, wobbling the board with the feet, belching, a wet foot slapping the floor, gurgling sounds from the throat, a whistle. Gestures included pouring fruit juice, serving food, threatening to hit the plate of potato chips, offering food to a companion, snapping fingers for the waiter, standing and dropping coins on the table, fumbling in a purse for coins but producing a handkerchief and blowing the nose, passing a salt shaker. The words, used sparingly, included numbers and the phrase "a little problem."

It becomes clear that the work is somewhat more complex than the score suggests. Gestures and movements are often accompanied by sounds or actually cause them. Words may be accompanied by gestures. But the element prescribed in the score for a particular moment is the determining factor even though sound and gesture may be inextricably related. Both are intended as part of the work, intended for perception, unlike the act of bowing a violin in a traditional orchestra where only the sound has perceptual value.

Except for "Free Gestures" the order of the specified activities and sounds are precisely determined by the score. But the particular manner is left to the actors. The process is similar to that of traditional music. Aperghis says that when the actors first begin working with a score, they "are caught in the inexorable mechanism of the musical system to which they are obedient." Later, playing with possibilities within the score "gives life to the formal construction." As they experiment with the rhythms of linking the fragment, with the accelerations and decelerations, with breaks, a cohesive performance is developed from juxtaposed and superimposed sounds and movements. What is of interest to Aperghis "are the interferences, the furtive, annexed stories, the sounds that do not normally accompany such and such an event . . . in short, the capricious, yet controlled, narrative of the form."

Sans Paroles was first presented at an actual cafe surrounded by unsuspecting customers. Gradually, the customers began to realize that the banal activities and sounds, usually ignored, were in fact part of a performance and they began to watch with interest. By structuring these fragments of behavior into a musical form they had transformed them into perceptual events.

Sans Paroles

Another work made just before *Sans Paroles* is similar in using a specific locale with its attendant sounds and movements. *La Tête dans la Valise (The Head in the Suitcase)* takes the simple idea of crowded living conditions such as those in Bagnolet and uses it as the basis for a musical theme. The group considers it "a sociological inquiry" into life in the concrete communities built near the large cities. Tables suggest high rise apartments with people living above, below, and on each

Several "systems" using the "grammar" invented by ATEM for structuring gestures and sounds. To devive a score from one of these "systems" it is necessary to assign a "word" to each number—i.e. a gesture, sound, phrase, or a free gesture. Each line represents a "sentence." The score is performed by reading each line from left to right beginning at the top.

```
1
1 + 2
1 + [illegible] + 3
1 + 2 + 3 + 4
1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5
1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6

                    1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6
                        2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6
                            3 + 4 + 5 + 6
                                4 + 5 + 6
                                    5 + 6
                                        6

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6
1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5
1 + 2 + 3 + 4
1 + 2 + 3
1 + 2
1

1                                         1
1 + 2                                 2 + 1
1 + 2 + 3                         3 + 2 + 1
1 + 2 + 3 + 4                 4 + 3 + 2 + 1
1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5         5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1
1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1
    2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 5 + 4 + 3 + 2
        3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 5 + 4 + 3
            4 + 5 + 6 + 5 + 4
                5 + 6 + 5
                    6
```

1
1 + 2
1 + 2 + 1
1 + 2 + 1 + 3
1 + 2 + 1 + 3 + 1
1 + 2 + 1 + 3 + 1 + 4
1 + 2 + 1 + 3 + 1 + 4 + 1
1 + 2 + 1 + 3 + 1 + 4 + 1 + 5
1 + 2 + 1 + 3 + 1 + 4 + 1 + 5 + 1
1 + 2 + 1 + 3 + 1 + 4 + 1 + 5 + 1 + 6

1
1 + 2
1 + 2 + 1
1 + 2 + 1 + 2
1 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 3
1 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 1
1 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 1 + 2
1 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 1 + 2 + 3
1 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4
1 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1
1 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2
1 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3
1 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4
1 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5
1 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 1
1 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 1 + 2
1 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 1 + 2 + 3
1 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4
1 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5
1 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6

side. Residents engage in daily tasks—brushing teeth, operating household appliances, practicing the violin, mowing the lawn, hanging out the laundry. These activities are in such close proximity that they impinge on each other. In fact, it is the chance interferences resulting from performing the score that makes for much of the interest in the work.

The work of ATEM has increasingly moved toward minimalism as Aperghis and the others investigate the point at which sound becomes music and where gesture, movement, and words become theatre. Earlier, when the group was larger, the productions were more elaborate while still reflecting a community involvement.

In 1977 they held separate workshops with two groups of Bagnolet residents—one involved about twenty old people, the other approximately thirty children aged eight to ten. To both groups they told the story of Antigone by way of stimulating imagination and recollection. *L'aveugle de Bagnolet (The Blind of Bagnolet),* first performed in that year, reflects particularly the workshop of old people. Their imagination was focused on the past, on memories of the war years, the fashionable world of the past with operettas and songs, political struggles, on the changing life in Bagnolet as the ancient city disappeared under concrete. The play draws upon the stories of the old people, but, as in their other work, ATEM abstracted the gestures and sounds organizing them into a musical system.

L'aveugle de Bagnolet

In *L'aveugle de Bagnolet* the performers sit at a long table covered with a white cloth. The table is set for an elegant dinner and at different times during the performance the behavior of those present suggests that the occasion for gathering is a funeral or a marriage ceremony or, perhaps, a clandestine dinner held during the German occupation. The twenty-five minute performance begins as a concert—sighs, sobs, gestures of despair, the sound of walnuts dropping from eyes and mouths to plates, the sound of a violin bow on the rim of a glass. By the use of coded signals the performers move from one sequence to another, from gestures and sounds of sadness to happier moments of embraces, blown kisses, and toasts, to threats and gestures of anger, to tinkling sounds of bells and glasses accompanied by contented sighs and languid stretchings. Interwoven here and there are images of a knife being put to the throat of a woman.

The most elaborate production, *Marchand de plaisir, marchand d'oublies (Merchant of Pleasure, Merchant of Forgetfulness)*, also made in 1977, drew upon both the children's and the old people's workshops. A member of ATEM says that from the children they derived invented stories relating to the themes of Antigone—disobedience, paternal power, and death. From the old people came a number of actual histories of Bagnolet, again related to the themes of Antigone. The workshops provided them with "the material necessary for the elaboration of the production: life imagined by the children, history lived by the old people—Antigone and Bagnolet confronted by the two extremes."

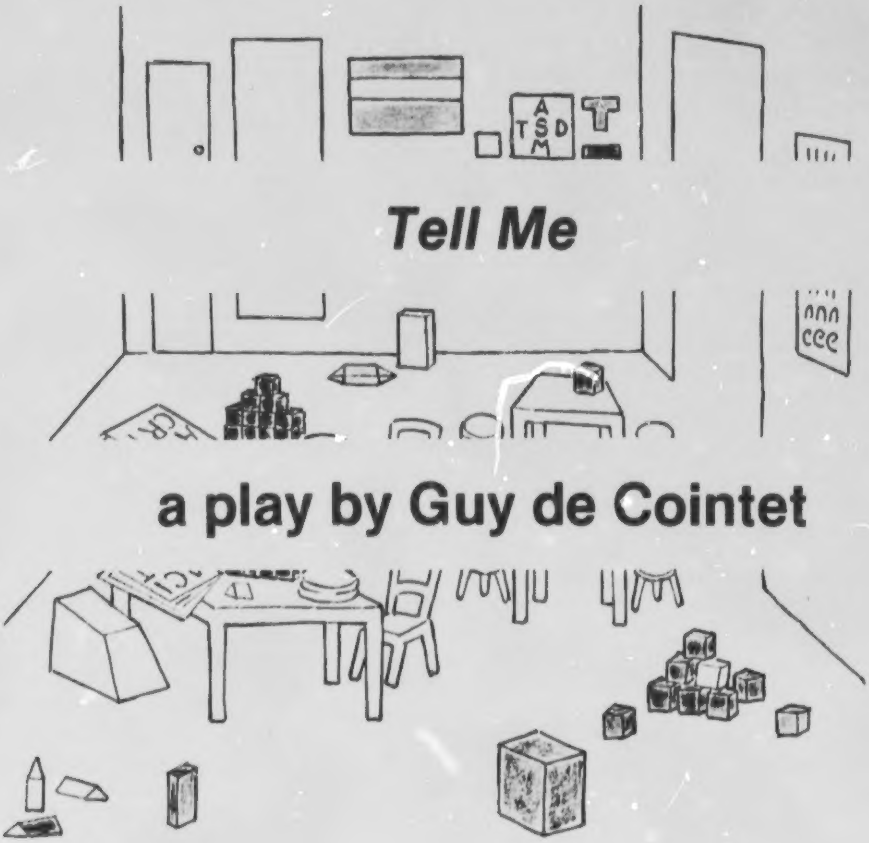
Marchand de plaisir, marchand d'oublies

As with the other works of ATEM, a musical system invented by Aperghis was used to score the sound and gestural elements chosen for the work. The seventy-minute work is divided into eight sequences, each loosely relating to an episode from the story of Antigone. But the score is more like a game embodying the recitations of children and everyday gestures as well as gestures arising from the story of Antigone. The members of ATEM describe it as "a puzzle from a collective memory."

Eight variously-shaped tables or workbenches are arranged in a semicircle and each is equipped with means for making sounds. One resembles a coffee table on which have been placed bottles and books. Another is a kind of street vendor's cart with pie tins, taut strings that can be plucked, and bicycle wheels with spokes that are bowed like a violin. There is also a carpenter's bench where a timber is sawed during a segment of the performance. In addition to these unconventional instruments, in a pit in the center of the stage are viola, saxophone, drums, recorder, and accordian. The performers also sing from time to time.

This was the last work of ATEM that used such elaborate musical means. The spareness of the more recent *Sans Paroles* reflects the growing minimalist interests of the group as they attempt to transform the banal sounds and gestures of everyday life into musical theatre, thereby liberating the imagination from what the group calls "the prison of signs."

Engaging in such esoteric research under the auspices of a municipality raises a question that ATEM has confronted. Is artistic research compatible with serving a large general audience? It is expected that they would find a sympathetic response from the select audiences at the international festivals where they have presented their work—at the Venice Biennale, the Avignon Festival, Festival d'Automne in Paris, and The New Theatre Festival in Baltimore—but what about the audiences in Bagnolet? The solution has been discovered in the circumstances of preparation and performance. First, through workshops, discussions, and improvisations they have developed interest and support among the population; and, second, by performing for small audiences arranged in cooperation with local organizations, a more personalized relationship is possible. Because productions such as *Sans Paroles* do not require elaborate equipment and decor, it is feasible to perform frequently for 20-100 spectators under the sponsorship of such groups as renters' organizations or associations of young immigrant workers. Through their commitment to community involvement, ATEM has been successful in continuing their specialized research while gaining the audience support necessary for continued municipal subventions.



Tell Me

a play by Guy de Cointet

by František Deák

> *We can in fact presume that there exist certain writers, painters, musicians, in whose eyes a certain exercise of structure (and not only its thought) represents a distinctive experience, and that both analysts and creators must be placed under the common sign of what we might call* structural man, *defined not by his ideas or his languages, but by his imagination—in other words, by the way in which he mentally experiences structure.* *(Roland Barthes* The Structuralist Activity*)*

In theatre, a heightened perception and experience of structure is possible in three kinds of work. The first is theatre based on strong codified conventions, as in Oriental theatre and a large part of Western folk theatre. In viewing Kabuki or No productions my awareness of structure is heightened not only because of the great variety and distribution of theatrical signs and their apparent systematic codification but also because, as a foreigner to Japanese culture and theatre, my attitude during the production is one of deciphering. Through the elements that are repeated over and over, I begin to unravel the structure of what I am seeing.

Another type of work that heightens the awareness of structure is work that tampers or experiments with the structure itself, or at least with one of its elements. The history of the avant-garde theatre is full of examples in which one or a series of elements are used in a new and unusual way, causing the audience to ponder the resulting new arrangement. The different uses of space from the proscenium theatre to environmental theatre, the changes in the relationship between stage and audience, for example, heighten an awareness of structure.

The third group of works that results in the mental experience of theatre structure are works deliberately conceived with this purpose in mind. If in the two previous cases, the experience of the structure was secondary, or even accidental, in view of the dominant aspect of the work, in the structuralist theatre the experience of the structure is not only dominant but the purpose of the work as well. It is possible that when it becomes clear that structuralism is not just a method or technique of analysis but an activity (comparable, according to Roland Barthes, to Surrealist activity) or a way of perceiving reality that it can also become an important way of art making. It would then be possible in the future to talk about a structuralist artist as one talks about a political one, the latter being concerned with politics (any kind of politics) and the former with structure (with various structures and different ways of experiencing them).

The work of Guy de Cointet, a Los Angeles artist who was born in Paris and who has lived in Los Angeles since 1968, can be considered structuralist in the purposeful sense. Guy de Cointet has been writing and staging his plays for about four years. He belongs to that group of artists (and tradition) who extend their work from one genre into another. In comparison with many contemporary artists who use performance or elements of theatre in their works, Guy de Cointet's productions are clearly theatrical. His way of working, writing a play, auditioning, then rehearsing is the way productions in theatre are traditionally done. He does not perform in his plays but hires actors and is his own director. Even the presentation of *Tell Me,* his latest play, performed twelve times in the Rosamund Felsen gallery in Los Angeles in March, 1979, was more typical of an off-Off-Broadway run than of performances by visual artists that tend to be given only once. However, what distinguishes Guy de Cointet from theatre artists is that, at least initially, he is not concerned with theatre. He does not conceive of his theatre pieces as a result of an analysis of theatre structure nor does he embark on doing theatre. He arrives at it. In his art work (drawings and artist books) Guy de Cointet is involved with translating the system of one language into another (often written language into a visual sign system) and with making cyphers, anagrams and other sign systems with complex codes. It was the continuation and extension of this work in time and space that led Guy de Cointet to theatre and which makes his plays and productions Structuralist.

The Play

The circumstances of the play are simple. Michael (used as a woman's name) and Olive are spending an evening at Mary's house. All three women are very good friends and have known each other for a long time. They expect Mark, Olive's boyfriend, to join them for dinner. Mark never shows up. They finish the evening by going to dinner at Arthur's, a neighbor who has just moved in. All this can be inferred from the play, but it is not the plot or subject of the play.

In *Tell Me* there is no apparent subject, plot, conflict or denouement. Talking—a succession of conversations between Mary, Michael and Olive (in various combinations)—entrances, exits and an occasional soliloquy are what this play consists of. The conversations are usually casual and about insignificant matters. It would be possible to imagine these conversations (the parts of the conversations that are not purposefully dislocated) as having been taken from a realistic play. In this hypothetical realistic play, this kind of dialog would function as a filler, not contributing to the plot or to the apparent meaning of the play but necessary to satisfy the conventions of the realistic genre. From the point of view of the dramatic structure, *Tell Me* is a play in which marginal conversation—the stage business of dialog—is the dominant element of the play.

The first experience of structure results from the absence of structural elements (plot, conflict, etc.) that are otherwise considered indispensable. The structure that the audience is reconstructing (experiencing) is the structure of the realistic play or, even more closely—for those who are familiar with this genre—the structure of the television soap opera. A different experience of a structure results from all the attention given to conversation. The beginnings of conversations, the sudden changes of subject and completing conversations by constant repetitions are experienced structurally. Entrances and exits—parts of structure that are almost never considered when talking about the structure of drama (even if there are great differences in their use from Shakespeare to Ibsen)—suddenly acquire in their arbitrariness (there is no plot to motivate them) the status of important structural elements.

The play begins with Mary and Michael entering the room. Mary is carrying an object, a white cardboard square with black capital letters A D M T on the four sides of the square and with a red capital S in the middle. The two women refer to this as the "old map." The beginning of the dialog is typical of the casual conversation that dominates the play.

> **Mary:** *Michael, thank you so much. What a handsome present! This old map looks wonderful here ...and fits perfectly my living room.*
>
> **Michael:** *It really does. Mary, I'm glad you like it. I found it this morning in a thrift shop under a pile of broken furniture...*

Here Michael, still describing the map, switches into rhetorical, literary language:

> *"Deep in the vast heart of Africa, encircled by treacherous desert, shielded by hazardous mountains, guarded by fierce and savage tribes, lies a legendary treasure: the fabled storehouse of King Solomon's mines."*

Mary picks up the language and style.

> **Mary:** *The three-hundred-year-old map which led to the discovery of incredible diamonds! ...A priceless piece! ...*

This rhetorical, obviously literary language is just one of the languages Guy de Cointet uses in his play. In other instances his characters switch from casual conversation into Chinese or Persian poetry, philosophical text (from Thoreau for

A
T S D
M
ACR
CIT

Michael (right) reading a newspaper, Mary talking about a tragedy Chrononhotonthologos.

example), lines from some exotic dime novel or some B movie ("the beautiful Madame Tchang is smoking and she says to herself"). These borrowed, ready-made texts range from units as long as the quoted example from Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* to one line or even a single expression. At times they are transcribed verbatim. On other occasions they are slightly paraphrased. As a result it is not always possible to distinguish if a line or an expression in a given context comes from a dime novel or a Chinese poem. On the stylistic level the flight into rhetorical, literary language juxtaposes the lifelike casual conversation with contrived literary language. This juxtaposition points out that both are particular styles and that, with a certain distance, the casual conversation will appear contrived as well.

On the level of language the use of ready-made (found) text is of much greater importance. In the context of the obviously borrowed texts, the language of the casual conversation becomes a ready-made, found text as well. Actually it is a ready-made text. Guy de Cointet argues that there is no need for him to invent his lines. They are all over in books, newspapers, television soap operas, conversations, etc. He assumes that since somebody else used them and that he found them interesting will probably mean that other people will notice them as well. It is the heightened sensibility to ready-made expressions that anybody learning foreign languages experiences that Guy de Cointet communicates in part to his audience.

But in its implication, the coexistence of different languages (the language of polite, social conversation, with the language of poetry, the dime novel, philosophical reflection, etc.) points toward an understanding of a language as consisting of separate languages that interact in every single act of communication. This view of language in the play is emphasized by switching into another language

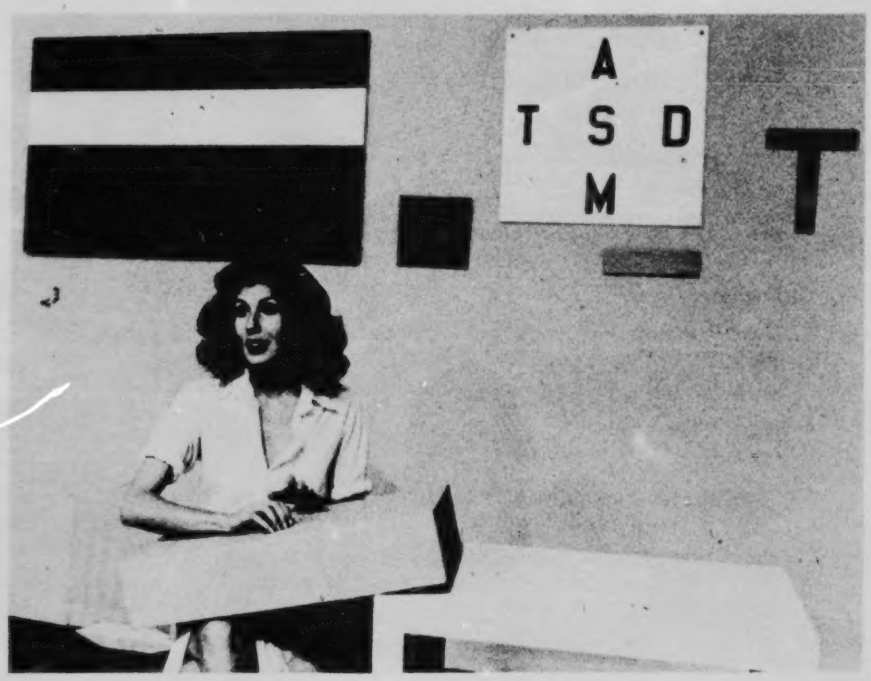
(Spanish) during a conversation, as well as by inserting into the conversation invented languages based on the five human senses. At times the communication among the characters is visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory and even through taste.

> **Michael:** *Don't worry. I'll go to the store. What do you need?*
>
> **Mary:** *...Potatoes ...Bananas ...string beans...What else? If you can find some* (she makes a gesture) *it would be very nice.*

Mary tells a story to Olive. She gets confused and frightened and, at Olive's request, tells her the story by "writing" in a touch language into Olive's hand.

> **Olive:** *Please, Mary, tell me.* (Olive holds out her hand to her. Mary tells the story into Olive's palm.)
>
> **Mary:** *How smooth and soft this palm is...* (Olive holds out both hands.)
>
> **Olive:** *Tell me more...* (Mary tells story in both hands.) *Obviously it was the wrong box.*
>
> **Mary:** *Absolutely.*

Olive writing a "sound letter" to Mark.



Michael tells Olive the story of her landlord who has disappeared. In the middle of the story she switches into phonetic language.

> **Michael:** *Mr. and Mrs. Johnson were having a cup of coffee in the kitchen of their condominium when...toctoctocto...toc...*
>
> **Olive:** *Please go on.*
>
> **Michael** *It's not a simple story. Nobody, not even Mrs. Johnson, knows how the whole thing started. There's still a lot of confusion. I'll tell you what I saw ...Toctoctoctoc...toctoc... toctoctoctoc...toctoc...toctoc...etc.*

In a similar manner the communication through taste and smell, which occurs less frequently, is incorporated into a text.

Another means by which the casual conversational language is dislocated is by the substitution of one word in a text for another. A mosquito flies around Mary's head and she catches it.

> **Mary:** *These snails. They are all over the place this time of the year.*

Both sentences are correct except that Mary calls the mosquito a snail. This kind of substitution is common in the text, at times going on for a while before switching back to the proper word. Mary and Michael are talking about Michael's grandmother when Michael asks for a cigarette, thus changing the direction of the conversation.

> **Mary:** *Your children must be very fond of her.*
>
> **Michael:** *They are. Mary, can I have a cigarette?*
>
> **Mary:** *A cigarette? Wouldn't you rather have a Scotch?*
>
> **Michael:** *No... I prefer a drink.*
>
> **Mary:** *What would you like to drink?*
>
> **Michael:** *A Marlboro.*
>
> **Mary:** *I'm sorry, Michael, I'm out of Marlboro. I drank the last drop of it yesterday morning ...What about a Havana?*
>
> **Michael:** *Fine.*
>
> **Mary:** *Here it is. Enjoy yourself. You're lucky! I just came back from Havana a few days ago. These are delicious...I'll drink one too.*
>
> **Michael:** *Did you see your brother over there?*
>
> **Mary:** *Yes, I did. Such a sad story! His wife is terribly ill, and he lost his job.*
>
> **Michael:** *I'm sorry to hear that. Your brother and I were such good friends a while ago...*
>
> **Mary:** *Fortunately, my cousin Daisy lives in Cuba right now. She's got an important and interesting government position. She said she'll find him another job...*
>
> **Michael:** *...And a serious doctor for his wife, I hope.*

Mary: *That's more difficult. Serious doctors...*

Michael: *You're right.*

Mary: *I'm right about what?*

Michael: *This Havana is a delight! .. Are you expecting some people for dinner?*

The substitution of drinking/smoking and scotch/cigarette (Havana) dislocates the casual dialog but also makes any further reference to drinking and smoking ambivalent as in the following scene toward the end of the play.

Olive: *Mary, are you interested in Arthur?*

Mary: *I guess I am. But I'm fond of Michael too. And Michael seems very fond of Arthur ...*

Olive: *So I noticed. I bet she's still at his house.*

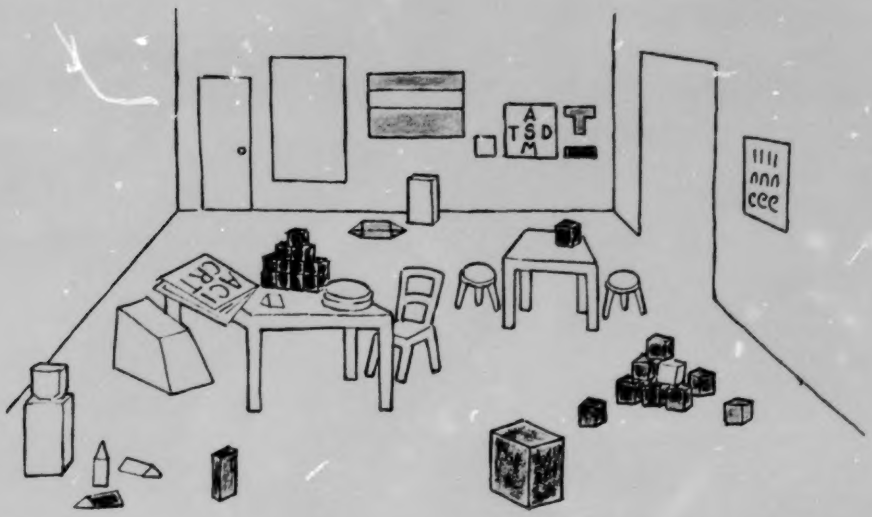
Mary: *Probably smoking.*

Olive: *And drinking ...*

Mary: *All those fancy cigars.*

Toward the end of the play some of the lines, expressions, images and specific dislocations are repeated again. Stories that were told by Mary, Michael and Olive are again alluded to—often just through a word or a sentence. As there is no plot, the play can not be resolved: the repetitions are the reiterations of the structural element. The structure is hermetic (one element referring to another) and generative (the play could go on generating scene after scene).

The set designed by Guy de Cointet is not just the physical space where the play takes place but a conceptual and structural element of the production that he had in mind while he was writing the play. The playing space is delineated by the walls of the gallery. In the middle of the wall directly across from the audience, a "painting"—a rectangular piece of cardboard with three stripes: green-white-green—is hanging. On its left hangs a white rectangular piece of cardboard ("painting") with the longer side vertical. Next to it is a door. The wall on the left side, which is perpendicular to the back wall faced by the audience, is empty. To the right of the green-and-white painting, on its lower side, is a smaller light blue square and next to it a small, orange, rectangular piece of cardboard. On the extreme right is a T-shaped piece of green cardboard. On the right wall, perpendicular to the back wall, is a door through which the audience enters and, next to it, closer to the audience hangs another painting, a piece of white cardboard with three lines of signs: lll on the upper line, nnn on the middle line and ccc on the lower line. Under the green-white painting is a light blue cardboard box. In the playing area are two tables with chairs. One of the tables, the larger one, is left of center, the smaller is right of center. On the bigger table are: orange cubes arranged into a pyramid, a sheet of paper with the big black letters A C I on the first line and C R T on the second line. Next to it is a small blue triangular object. On the other smaller table is a black cube. In front of this table are more cubes: seven black, one white and one green. More toward the right and closer to the audience is a red cardboard box. Next to it toward the left are a few triangular objects of blue, white and red. Next to them is a black cardboard box.



Framed by the white walls of the gallery, these objects in their geometrical shapes and color schemes appear to be possible art objects. The impression given is one of an installation. The aspect of installation, disappears however, as the actors enter, transforming it into a set and identifying it as the living room of Mary's house. As the play proceeds, each object on the set is identified, either by being directly named or through an action. The green-and-white striped piece of cardboard becomes a painting when it is described as such. The white piece of cardboard next to it does not turn out to be a painting but a mirror. The green T-shaped cardboard becomes a telephone. The orange cubes that form a pyramid on the table are a book. The set that was an abstract installation becomes a concrete one as the performance advances.

This process of denomination of stage and properties, the establishment of a specific-code system (what represents what) is fundamental to theatre. Even in a realistic set that allows the majority of objects to be identified on the basis of recognition from life, there still remains some that are identified only through the action. Just as, for example, the audience learns in the production of *Tell Me* that the door on the left facing the audience is a door to the kitchen and that the door on the right leads outside the house, the audience would learn the function of the doors in any realistic set. The process of the recognition of the objects and their function on the stage, the conventions and codes that are involved in it, are usually perceived automatically without any conscious effort. By transforming the abstract set into a concrete one through the theatrical action, Guy de Cointet makes this process visible and conscious.

Acting has a very special function in the production of *Tell Me*. It is the element that unifies the text and the set. The fact that it is a unifying element does not make it special. Acting usually has this function in the structure of the dramatic theatre. What makes the case of *Tell Me* special is that the unifying function of acting is purposefully pointed out. In the first scene of the play when the old map (a white cardboard square with black capital letters [A D M T] on four sides of the square and with a red capital S in the middle) is put on the wall, the already quoted text from *King Solomon's Mines* follows. The relationship between the old map and the text from the script is not comprehensible. It becomes so when Denise Domerque, who plays Michael, coordinates the text with the capital letters of the old map. The actress reciting the text points toward the map: "Deep in the vast heart of Africa (she points to A), encircled by treacherous desert (points to D) shielded by hazardous mountains (M), guarded by fierce and savage tribes (T), lies a legendary treasure (T): the fabled storehouse (S) of King Solomon's (S) mines."

The actress is the connecting element between the linguistic and visual elements. She does not decipher the old map. She is just the missing link (element) that when put between the language and visual signs, completes the structure. In so doing, she makes it comprehensible in each of its elements as well as in its entirety.

In view of the numerous dislocations of text and the abstractness of the set, the blocking, timing and acting in general had to be very clear and precise, with no ambiguities of any kind. The actors played it completely straight. They had to relate to the objects and props on the set in a clear and convincing way. The acting was devoid of any irony, detailed characterization or subtext. During the rehearsals that lasted a month and a half, Guy de Cointet put great emphasis on the exactness of blocking, timing and clarity in every movement and gesture. Prior to the beginning of rehearsal, he blocked the entire play from moment to moment in colorful diagrams. He explained on the ground plan of the set the identity and function of all the objects and props. The three actresses (Jane Zingale, Helen Mendez and Denise Domerque) who played Mary, Olive and Michael are physically well-distinguishable types. They all wore simple but elegant clothing (Mary in red, Olive in white and Michael in black)

Michael reading the old map to Mary.

and high-heel shoes that, on the small stage, emphasized their walk. The color scheme of their costumes (only major colors, no half-tones) and their simplicity (no ornaments but clear lines) corresponded visually to the set and gave the costumes an aspect of abstractness as well. During the rehearsals, Guy de Cointet encouraged each actress to develop a very distinctive stage figure based on her own temperament. The result was three stage figures that in their manners, gestures, movements and voice were the most constant and unambiguous structural elements of the production.

The initial idea that Guy de Cointet had was to write a play about and around people talking together who knew each other very well. As a result of this familiarity, they can understand or misunderstand each other without further explanation or without ever noticing it. The elements of conversation and the conversation itself are treated structurally in relation to this idea. Just by reading the play, it is possible to experience this structure to a degree. But in performance, when there is a sudden dislocation in the text without a corresponding dislocation in acting, the distance that is created between the text and acting makes the audience experience the structure of the conversation very strongly. This experience seemed to be objectively true from the reactions of the audience. I felt that Guy de Cointet, by making the process of stage denomination visible, was staging a theoretical hypothesis about the nature of theatre. This reaction was, perhaps, personal—resulting from my own preoccupation with the theoretical problems of theatre.

It is not unusual to talk about the subject, theme, acting and directing after seeing a performance. But it would be unusual to share the experience of the structure. First, the consciousness of structure in theatre is not too common and, second there is no precedent to talk about the structure of experience at all. Structuralist analysis concentrates on the work itself and not on the structure of experience of the audience, which obviously is the one that ultimately counts. Structuralist theatre, besides being a distinct way of art-making, suggests by its emphasis on the experience of structure a change in priorities from the analysis of the object to the analysis of the structure of experience.

Patterning in the *Five Shaggy-Dog Operas*

by Tom Johnson

This. This is. This is a. This is a simple. This is a simple additive. This is a simple additive process. Obviously patterns of this sort can also be employed with visual or musical elements, but since we are dealing here with typeface on paper, it seems most appropriate to begin with words.

Then there are. Rotations then there. Are rotations then. There are rotations. Or at least "rotations" is the term I like to use for patterns of this sort. We could also consider this a type of phasing. Since there are four words but only three are permitted in each sentence, the word pattern falls out of phase with the syntactical pattern and the two do not come back in sync until the word pattern has been repeated three times and the syntactical pattern four times. Again, this is a device that can be easily applied to nonverbal materials. In fact, my own interest in rotations comes largely from music, where this same principle served as the foundation of the isometric motets in the 14th century, and has been applied in a variety of ways in recent experimental music.

Permutations don't interest me. Permutations don't me interest. Me permutations interest don't. Me interest permutations don't. Interest me permutations don't. Interest me don't permutations. Interest don't me permutations. Don't. . . . There are too many ways to do them, they are almost impossible to memorize, and the result is usually messy and unpredictable. It is simply too difficult to perceive patterns of this sort.

But but but but but. But but but but filling. But but but filling in. But but filling in works. But filling in works well. The process is easily perceived, predictable, and very neat, and those are the main qualities that I was looking for in the *Five Shaggy-Dog Operas* and have sought in other works since then.

There, are obviously, many other types, of patterns that one, could work with in a, theatrical context where one has complete, control over the rhythms and, sound qualities and pitches, and light cues, and everything, else. And, it is, of course more, interesting to perceive structural, patterns on several levels at, once but these simple examples in, words will serve to demonstrate, some of the basic, principles that I, like to, use. Hopefully, the reader, will also see, how it is possible, to shift the emphasis from, content to form and create a, rather cool abstract atmosphere in, which the form becomes, far more interesting, than the, content.

My motivations for wanting to work with logical sequences came from several directions. On the one hand there were visual artists, like Sol Lewitt, whose works I admired, and who had demonstrated over and over again that neat symmetrical patterns could have a strong esthetic impact in and of themselves, provided they were carefully worked out and easily perceived. From dance there was Kathy Duncan, who had worked with Laura Dean, and whose predilections for tight formal structures led me in that direction whenever I collaborated with her. In the field in which I had been trained, music, most of the patterning techniques recently used by composers seem either too intricate to perceive clearly or too obvious to suit my purposes, but in some of Frederic Rzewski's work, in Charlie Morrow's counting pieces, and in Daniel Goode's "Circular Thoughts," I found some valuable insights.

Of course, when one thinks of systemic music, one generally thinks of the twelve-tone system, but for me, serialism has been much more of a negative influence than a positive one. The sharp difference between what the serialists had done and what I wanted to do was a matter of perceptibility. For the serialists, the manipulations of 12-tone rows merely provided subliminal logic, and the listener was always expected to focus on the first-level emotional content of the music. My own goal was not only to call attention to logical sequences, but to make them so easily perceptible that the listener could actively follow the process, could predict what would happen next, and would be drawn into the beauty of patterns in and of themselves. Furthermore, I wanted to do this in a theatrical context, where logical progressions could be reflected in text and staging, as well as in purely musical terms. By reinforcing everything on several visual and aural levels, the patterning could be relatively intricate and still be followed easily by the attentive viewer.

It seemed to me that there was a particular need for a degree of logical rigor in theatre, as in opera. In both areas, the more traditional work continued to sacrifice the possibilities of form to what were regarded as the necessities of plot and character. Meanwhile newer approaches, such as those of Robert Wilson and Meredith Monk, were shaped in dream-like sequences that seemed to me to be even more subjective and less predictable.

Only in the early works of Richard Foreman did I find theatrical precedents for what I was looking for. I remember being particularly struck by passages in *Total Recall* and *Hotel China*, where the logic seemed to be going where I wanted to go. Line, tape cue, line, tape cue, gesture, buzzer, music. Line, tape cue, line, tape cue, gesture, buzzer, music. Even in Foreman's case, however, patterns of this sort were always sacrificed for something else within a matter of a few minutes.

Essentially I was misunderstanding Foreman's work. He was not really concerned with logical patterning, and he didn't intend for viewers to be thinking about such things. Nonetheless, the beauty I found in Foreman's sequences provided valuable clues as to how to approach systemic theatre. Meanwhile, of course, there were groups like the Structuralist Workshop and the Theatre of Mistakes, whose concerns were much closer to mine, but I was not aware of their work in 1976, when I sketched out the bulk of the *Five Shaggy-Dog Operas*.

Drawers

The *Five Shaggy-Dog Operas* are five short pieces, intended to be presented as a unit. They were premiered at the Drama Ensemble Space in New York in the fall of 1978 and were later presented at the Fine Arts Festival at the University of North Carolina. The production was designed by a sculptor, Alan Finkel, whom I worked with quite closely during the rehearsal period, and the five simple objects he produced for the five simple operas eventually became the titles of the individual pieces, as well as providing an extremely sparse, focused set. In "Drawers," a soprano soloist has lost her thimble. She searches for it in a chest of drawers that has eight drawers on the bottom row, seven drawers on the next row, six on the next, and so on, reflecting the structure of the verses. In "Window," the Tenor and Baritone spend the whole time washing, one at a time, the 20 panes of a very dirty window. "Door" features a door that is knocked upon at intervals and a soprano and mezzo who never answer it. "Dryer" involves a set of wooden drying racks on which the baritone, a fisherman, hangs up the fish he catches, while a mystified tenor observes. In "Box," all four singers walk around a large wooden crate, wondering what might be inside it. As in all true shaggy-dog stories, each of these situations eventually leads to a pointless punch line. The best way to describe the structure of the operas is to present an event-by-event description of one of them.

Door

A door is suspended several feet above the floor at the extreme left. The Soprano and the Mezzo are asleep in white lounge chairs at the right, they are wearing dark glasses with white rims, and white sun dresses. The rest of the stage is empty and black.

Eight loud knocks. Mezzo wakes up, sips a cold drink, and freezes. Eight loud knocks. Mezzo picks up a flyswatter, swats fly, and freezes. Eight loud knocks. Mezzo sits up, opens a magazine, and freezes.

An eight-note arpeggio rises slowly in the piano. Soprano sings "That," and Mezzo flips a page of her magazine. A different eight-note arpeggio in the piano. Soprano sings "sounds," and Mezzo flips a page of her magazine. A different eight-note arpeggio in the piano. Soprano sings "like," and Mezzo flips a page of her magazine. A different eight-note arpeggio in the piano. Soprano sings "the," and Mezzo flips a page of her magazine. A different eight-note arpeggio in the piano. Soprano sings "door." Mezzo puts down her magazine, sings a cadenza on the text "Yawn yawn yaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaawn" and goes back to sleep.

Seven loud knocks. Soprano wakes up, sips a cold drink, and freezes. Seven loud knocks. Soprano picks up flyswatter, swats fly, and freezes. Seven loud knocks. Soprano sits up, opens a magazine, and freezes.

A seven-note arpeggio rises slowly in the piano. Mezzo sings "Some," and Soprano flips a page of her magazine. A different seven-note arpeggio in the piano. Mezzo sings "one," and Soprano flips a page of her magazine. A different seven-note arpeggio in the piano. Mezzo sings "must," and Soprano flips a page of her magazine. A different seven-note arpeggio in the piano. Mezzo sings "be," and Soprano flips a page of her magazine. A different seven-note arpeggio in the piano. Mezzo sings "there." Soprano puts down her magazine, sings a cadenza on the text "Yawn yawn yaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaawn" and goes back to sleep.

Six loud knocks. Mezzo wakes up, sips a cold drink, and freezes. Six loud knocks. Mezzo picks up flyswatter, swats fly, and freezes. Six loud knocks. Mezzo sits up, opens a magazine, and freezes.

A six-note arpeggio rises slowly in the piano. Soprano sings "I," and Mezzo flips a page of her magazine. A different six-note arpeggio in the piano. Soprano sings "wonder," and Mezzo flips a page of her magazine. A different six-note arpeggio in the piano. Soprano sings "who," and Mezzo flips a page of her magazine. A different six-note arpeggio in the piano. Soprano sings "it," and Mezzo flips a page of her magazine. A different six-note arpeggio in the piano. Soprano sings "is." Mezzo puts down her magazine, sings a cadenza on the text "Yawn yawn yaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaawn" and goes back to sleep.

Five loud knocks. Soprano wakes up, takes a bottle of suntan lotion, puts some on her right leg and right arm. Shifting the bottle to the other hand, she puts some on her left leg and left arm. She spreads a little lotion on her nose, puts the cap back on the bottle, sets the bottle down, and freezes. Five loud knocks. Soprano sips a cold drink, and freezes. Five loud knocks. Soprano sits up, opens a magazine, and freezes.

A five-note arpeggio rises slowly in the piano. Mezzo sings "I can't," and Soprano flips a page of her magazine. A different five-note arpeggio in the piano. Mezzo sings "imagine who," and Soprano flips a page of her magazine. A different five-note arpeggio in the piano. Mezzo sings "would be," and Soprano flips a page of her magazine. A different five-note arpeggio in the piano. Mezzo sings "calling on," and Soprano flips a page of her magazine. A different five-note arpeggio in the piano. Mezzo sings "us now." Soprano puts down her magazine, sings a cadenza on the text "Yawn yawn yaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaawn" and goes back to sleep.

Four loud knocks. Mezzo wakes up, sips a cold drink, and freezes. Four loud knocks. Mezzo picks up flyswatter, swats fly, and freezes. Four loud knocks. Mezzo sits up, opens a magazine, and freezes.

A four-note arpeggio rises slowly in the piano. Soprano sings "It is," and Mezzo flips a page of her magazine. A different four-note arpeggio in the piano. Soprano sings "probably nobody," and Mezzo flips a page of her magazine. A different four-note arpeggio in the piano. Soprano sings "that we," and Mezzo flips a page of her magazine. A different four-note arpeggio in the piano. Soprano sings "really want," and Mezzo flips a page of her magazine. A different four-note arpeggio in the piano. Soprano sings "to see." Mezzo puts down her magazine, sings a cadenza on the text "Yawn yawn yaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaawn" and goes back to sleep.

Three loud knocks. Soprano wakes up, sips a cold drink, and freezes. Three loud knocks. Soprano picks up flyswatter, swats fly, and freezes. Three loud knocks. Soprano sits up, opens a magazine, and freezes.

A three-note arpeggio rises slowly in the piano. Mezzo sings "But we," and Soprano flips a page of her magazine. A different three-note arpeggio in the piano. Mezzo sings "will never," and Soprano flips a page of her magazine. A different three-note arpeggio in the piano. Mezzo sings "be sure," and Soprano flips a page of her magazine. A different three-note arpeggio in the piano. Mezzo sings "unless we," and Soprano flips a page of her magazine. A different three-note arpeggio in the piano. Mezzo sings "answer it." Soprano puts down her magazine, sings a cadenza on the text "Yawn yawn yaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaawn" and goes back to sleep.

Two loud knocks. Mezzo wakes up, takes a bottle of suntan lotion, puts some on her left leg and left arm. Shifting the bottle to the other hand, she puts some on her right leg and right arm. She spreads a little lotion on her nose, puts the cap back on the bottle, sets the bottle down, and freezes. Two loud knocks. Mezzo sips a cold drink, and freezes. Two loud knocks. Mezzo sits up, opens a magazine, and freezes.

A two-note arpeggio rises slowly in the piano. Soprano sings "Maybe," and Mezzo flips a page of her magazine. A different two-note arpeggio in the piano. Soprano sings "we," and Mezzo flips a page of her magazine. A different two-note arpeggio in the piano. Soprano sings "should," and Mezzo flips a page of her magazine. A different two-note arpeggio in the piano. Soprano sings "answer," and Mezzo flips a page of her magazine.

A different two-note arpeggio in the piano. Soprano sings "it." Mezzo puts down her magazine, sings a cadenza on the text "Yawn yawn yaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaawn" and goes back to sleep.

One loud knock. Soprano wakes up, sips a cold drink, and freezes. One loud knock. Soprano picks up flyswatter, swats fly, and freezes. One loud knock. Soprano sits up, opens a magazine, and freezes.

A single note sounds in the piano. Mezzo sings "Yes," and Soprano flips a page of her magazine. Another piano note. Mezzo sings "I," and Soprano flips a page of her magazine. Another piano note. Mezzo sings "think," and Soprano flips a page of her magazine. Another piano note. Mezzo sings "we," and Soprano flips a page of her magazine. Another piano note. Mezzo sings "should." Soprano puts down her magazine, sings a cadenza on the text "Yawn yawn yaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaawn" and goes back to sleep.

Silence. Mezzo wakes up, sips a cold drink, and freezes. Silence. Mezzo picks up flyswatter, swats fly, and freezes. Silence. Mezzo sits up, opens a magazine, and freezes.

Silence. Soprano sits up and sings "But," and Mezzo flips a page of her magazine. Silence. Soprano sings "now," and Mezzo flips a page of her magazine. Silence. Soprano sings "they've," and Mezzo flips a page of her magazine. Silence. Soprano sings "stopped," and Mezzo flips a page of her magazine. Silence. Soprano sings "knocking." Mezzo puts down her magazine. The two singers, together, sing a short duet on the text "Yawn yawn yaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaawn" and go back to sleep.

Following each of the Shaggy-Dog Operas, the stage manager pulled down a window shade that contained multiple-choice questions. Even though you have been reading a text instead of actually experiencing the piece, the "Door" questions still seem relevant:

At first there were
  a. four knocks and four piano notes
  b. four knocks and eight piano notes
  c. eight knocks and four piano notes
  d. eight knocks and eight piano notes

The sequence of gestures was generally
  a. sip, pick up magazine, swat
  b. sip, swat, pick up magazine
  c. swat, sip, pick up magazine
  d. swat, pick up magazine, sip

Not counting yawns, the nine verses each contained
  a. four words
  b. five words
  c. four or eight words
  d. five or ten words

Such questions are
  a. relevant and interesting
  b. relevant and uninteresting
  c. irrelevant and interesting
  d. irrelevant and uninteresting

• • •

Throughout the performance of "Door" the singers attempt to make the sitting positions, lying positions, yawning positions, flyswatting positions, and so on, exactly the same each time, so that the clarity of the structure is enforced, and the piece as a whole becomes a hard-edged ritual rather than a situation in which the audience identifies with the characters. Of course, this somber abstract tone is offest by the basic ludicrousness of the situation, and the mood is abruptly broken with each yawning cadenza, where the vocal lines are as free, as human, and as lyrical as in a conventional opera. Nor is the tightly structured evening totally without surprise. The two times when the singers put on suntan lotion, breaking the usual pattern, become jolting moments in this context, and of course, the ending can never quite be predicted.

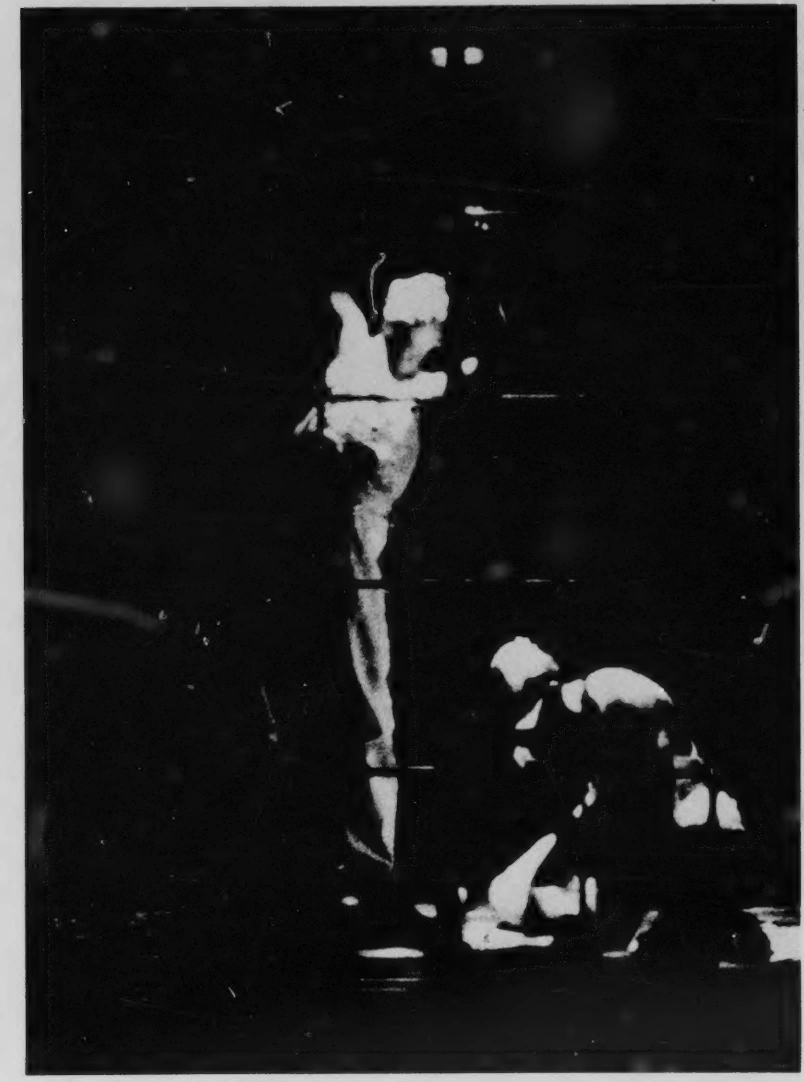
Even in a piece as clear as this, perceptibility can be a problem. Some viewers I spoke with were able to follow almost everything that was going on as early as the second or third verse, but others were not even aware of the decline in the number of knocks, for example, until the piece was almost over. Audiences don't like to count or remember or think about structure, or at least they think they don't, and a certain amount of encouragement is necessary in order to clue them in on what to look for and listen for, and to encourage them to pick up on the subtleties that are taking place, instead of becoming bored trying to find more familiar elements. The multiple-choice questions were particularly useful in this case, since they pointed out structural elements, as well as providing comic relief and giving the audience something to think about during the stage changes. No one likes to do badly on a test, even in a case like this, where no one will ever know. Eventually theatregoers, like gallery visitors, will no doubt become accustomed to the fact that structural progressions themselves can be beautiful, and will settle in on that level without being coaxed. For now, however, the whole idea of systemic theatre is quite new, and audiences do not know how to approach it. Nor, for that matter, do we know a whole lot about how to make it.

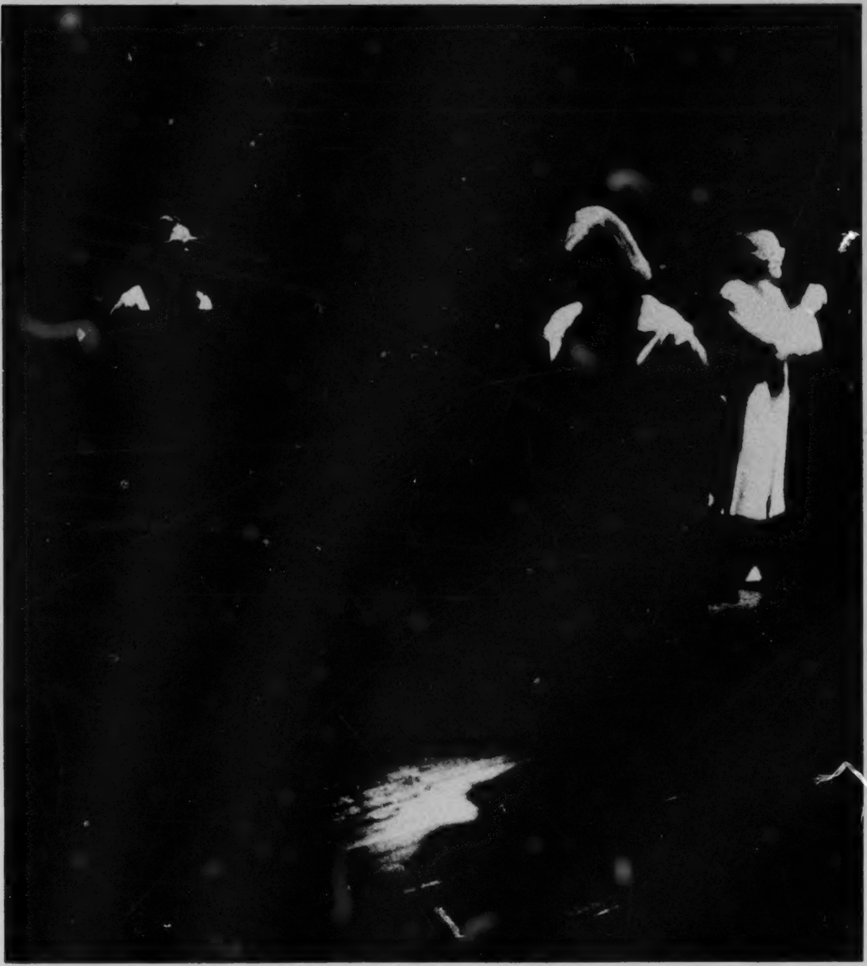
Dryer

30

One problem is that new acting skills are required. In "Dryer," to take only one example, the fisherman casts his line six times, once at the beginning of each verse. And for the purpose of structural clarity, which must be the main goal in theatre that is about structure, it is desirable that the actor cast the line in exactly the same way in exactly the same rhythm each time. I am not looking for a robot, of course. It is important that such actions be done by humans. But it would be better if they were done so well as to seem almost superhuman.

Window





Box

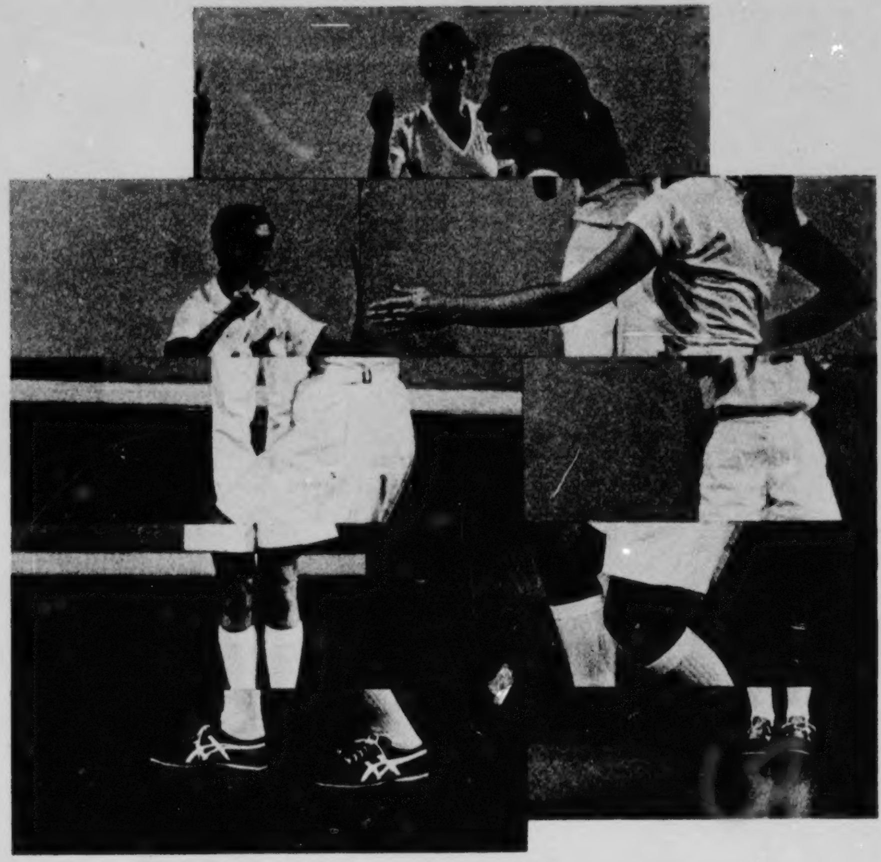
The cast I worked with (Emily Derr, Jacqueline Pierce, Gene Rickard, and Peter Lightfoot) all had traditional operatic training, and their background in that highly stylized art form probably prepared them for the problems we encountered in the *Five Shaggy-Dog Operas* better than any traditional acting training would have. Nor would any of the types of training that generally take place in experimental theatre workshops have been particularly relevant to goals of this sort

Another performance limitation has to do with memory. Certain passages had to be simplified during the rehearsal period because it was too difficult for the performers to remember accurately all of the little distinctions I would have liked to make between, for example, the eighth verse and ninth verse. But that too, I should think, could be developed. I can envision the possibility of theatrical performers who would have such self-discipline, such physical control, such well-developed memories, and such strong concentration, that they would be able to repeat gestures, or to make countless minute adjustments from verse to verse, with total accuracy, or at least with far greater accuracy than is now possible. And I can envision that the results would be astounding. But such performers do not yet exist.

Another problem is that we still know relatively little about the types of patterns available to us. Many types are obvious, such as the ones demonstrated at the beginning of this article, or the ones used in "Door." Many equally perceptible structures can be readily deduced from patterns found in systemic paintings or in Middle-Eastern mosaics. But there are no doubt many other less obvious types of sequences that could be applied if we knew about them. I recently ran across an article in the "Mathematical Games" section of an old *Scientific American*, for example, which involved a little system that mathematicians have dubbed "dragons," because of the shapes that the process produces when mapped out on graph paper. I'm not quite sure what this elegantly simple process has to do with theatre, but I found that it produces wonderful melodies, and I expect that it can do other things as well. More recently I have been talking with a mathematician and discovering that a lot of work has been done in his field involving ways of ordering sequences, and I am discovering that many of the patterns that have interested mathematicians are remarkably simple and straightforward. Properly understood, and carefully adapted, I see no reason why they could not be made as clear and beautiful to theatre audiences as they are to mathematicians. The possibilities are endless, and they remain almost completely unexplored in theatre, only partially explored in music and dance, and probably not thoroughly explored even in the visual arts. Yet such patterns are all around us all the time.

Just as I was putting the finishing touches on this article, my wife came in to show me a gloxinia she had been observing. Four large leaves had grown out in four directions and above each one, four smaller buds were beginning to spread out into a similar shape. It was a lovely healthy plant, and we couldn't help admiring the orderly way in which it was structuring its life, following its internal system, and making no exceptions. I guess you could say it looked something like TthisHthisIthisSthis. Maybe someday there will be a third generation of leaves and the plant will look more like **T**TthisHthisIthisSthis**H**TthisHthisIthisSthis**I**TthisHthisIthisSthis**S**TthisHtisIthsSthis. Maybe someday someone will write a play about it.

Tom Johnson, best known for *The Four Note Opera*, is also a critic and has written regularly for the *Village Voice* since 1971.



David Gordon's *What Happened*

by Burt Barr

David Gordon's dance piece, *What Happened,* opened at the American Theatre Lab, in September, 1978.

The stage is well-lighted when seven women enter. Some of the women are wearing white walking shorts with kneesocks, others are in white pants, and all are wearing white tops. Across the width and depth of the stage dancers take random positions, paces away from one another. They face the audience, looking straight ahead, arms at their sides—a group of women simply being themselves.

A car being started is heard; the car moves away, then there is a crash, followed by police and ambulance sirens. When the sound of sirens dies in the distance, the women begin speaking and moving. the stage is awash in words and gestures.

Over the sweeping view of the stage the dancers turn and pivot, some take steps, all of them talk, gesture, but none leave the given spheres in which they began. Each dancer is performing full-out, the movements crisp and short, the words loud and distinct. Singling out one performer, then others, certain words are heard: an old man... a baby... an old friend... not an old man but a grandfather.

What Happened is composed of seven different but similar stories. In each story there are words and passages common to all of them, thus certain words are heard many times and the same movements, dependent on the words, are seen repeatedly. When a dancer utters the words "the old man," she bends forward, places her hands on the small of her back, then points to herself. For the word "baby," another common word, a dancer links her arms together as if cradling a baby and rocks them back and forth. The word "friend" is shown by a performer who extends her arm as if to drape it around someone's shoulder, then her hand droops and swoops downward into the gesture for a handshake. Also there are movements related to the sound of a word and not its meaning. "Avail" is depicted by a dancer drawing her hands downward over her face. The word "way" is shown by two cupped hands, palms up, going up and down as if weighing something. The word "would" is shown by a dancer touching the wood floor.

It is impossible to focus on a particular performer in order to hear or see an entire story of *What Happened*. When one dancer reaches a greater degree of clarity, it is only momentary, as another performer commands attention, and just as she becomes prominent she is lost to yet another. Each dancer has an equal performing weight, and they forever cancel one another's speech and actions.

In this first section of the piece when seven performers take to the stage at once, speaking and moving in a flurry of activity, they avoid near physical collisions with one another by having the option, upon uttering any word, of swivelling into a one-quarter turn or of pivoting in a semicircle. There is also movement dependent on action words such as "stumbled," "running," and "walking." With these words they can take extra or fewer steps, stay in the foreground or the background, keep in center stage or off to the sides. Similar gestures done by several performers have different visual appearances due to their being done in profile, toward or away from the audience.

After several minutes of words and gestures, Hamlet's "To Be or Not To Be..." soliloquy is heard. Midway through the soliloquy, the words and movement become clearer, growing more united, and toward the end they are in unison. At the conclusion of the Hamlet speech the dancers come to a momentary pause, bringing an end to the first segment.

The dancers regroup, four of them taking off-center stage positions, the other three off to the sides, where they remain as observers. The four women at the center dominate the stage and begin the story once more. In this segment the women are in accordance with one another. While each has her own version to enact, there are passages in all seven stories that run parallel to one another and when this occurs, there is total synchronization on the stage.

There are certain words built into the stories of *What Happened* that serve as instructions for the performers to either stay in sync or not. For example, the command words such as "stop," "out," "up," and "over" tell a dancer where she is in the piece in relation to the others. If a dancer finds herself falling somewhat behind or moving too far ahead, there are the action words —"stumbled," "running," and "walking"— that have the dual purpose of also dealing with time changes. These words enable a performer to move at a desired pace. In the first section, all the performers were out of sync, and the command words those of time changes were employed to accomplish that disjointed presentation. But now, in the second part, where unison is called for, the same words serve as guides to coordinate performers.

Following Shakespeare's words, the women stop moving and face the audience. They embark on a continuation of the story that was not heard in the first segment. They speak of the police arriving... ambulances arriving an accident... that they were witnesses... Upon reaching the very last line, "I left right away," two dancers exit.

During the third segment, five performers remain. Three are at the right, two at the left. The duet speaks normally but their voices are inaudible to the audience. Every so often they break from their subdued voices by saying the command words more loudly whenever they occur in the stories, letting the trio on the opposite side of the stage know where they are. Of the trio, two dancers actively move and speak while the third member is silent but moving. The movement here is never one of pantomine and nowhere in *What Happened* is it pantomimic. In pantomime, all the mute gestures are central to the telling of the tale. Here, movement accompanies and dramatizes the speech; the story could not be derived from their gestures alone.

Although the complexity of the previous run-throughs has subsided, the duet and trio steadily counter each other. It is and on-again, off-again recitation, and the story of *What Happened* continues to move in and out of focus. In addition to varying story lines, each story has words that have one meaning in the phrase that precedes them and quite another in the phrase that follows. They serve to shift the meaning while moving the story along in one smooth flow. For example: "when man was a monkey at the top of the morning to you" or "where I live over a five and ten minutes to three." Built with the use of these connectives, each story is one long sentence. And even with one or two performers telling their stories, the sentence takes sudden turns, leaving a listener stranded until another story is heard. At the end of this segment, one dancer of the trio reaches the last line, "I left right away," and she leaves. Moments later, the other speaking member of the trio speaks those last words, and she too exits.

When the remaining three performers meet in midstage, they are at midpoints in their stories. here there is the expectation that the complete story will at last be heard. But in moments one dancer leaves. She is soon followed by another, leaving one performer. Only her last line of "I left right away" is heard alone and intact; then she leaves, bringing the piece to a close.

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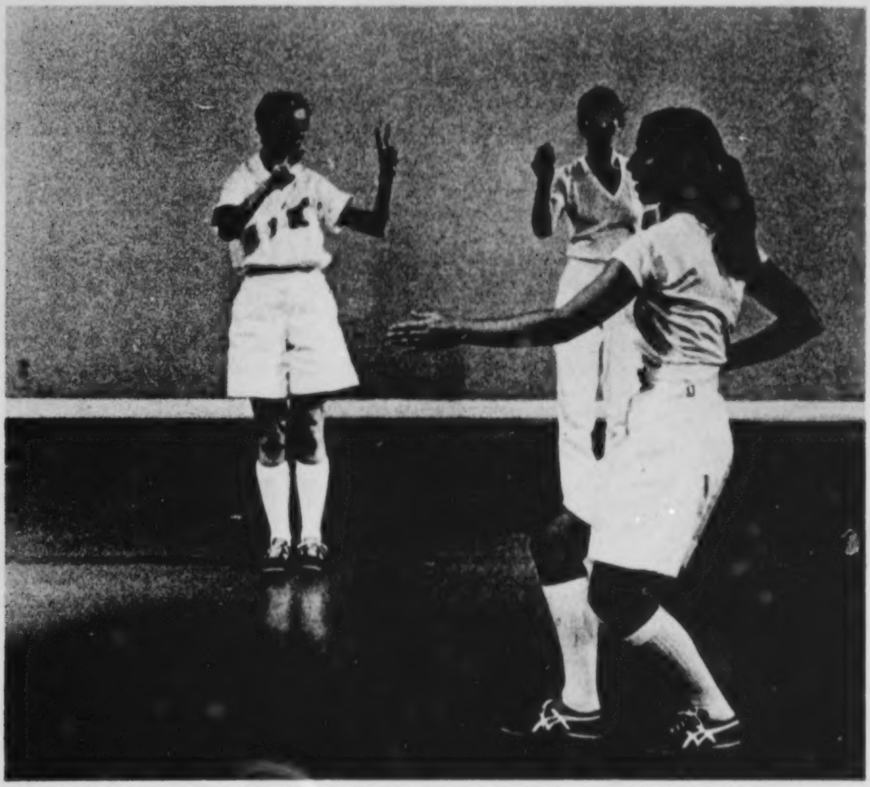
What Happened uses a basic narrative common to each of its seven stories—that of an accident, of a possible death. Due to the rearrranging of the main characters and certain events, and to subtle twists caused by adding or deleting words, different tales evolve. A story of a baby might possibly have been heard, to another it was of an old man, another heard of an old friend, and still someone else may have heard of a woman who feared that her child was being harmed. The entire work consists of three parts: the first section is the beginning of the seven stories. The second part is

Hamlet's soliloquy, and the third part is the completion of the story, which tells of the police and ambulances arriving. There is but one version of the third part. The dialog is performed four times and takes, overall, thirty minutes.

Each of the seven stories written by David Gordon is told in the same direct manner. It is written with a controlled vocabulary, using a limited number of words. The narrative is unemotional, all the words nonexpressive of feeling, and so is the movement—just straight-to-the-ear and the straight-to-the-eye contact. Even though the language is precise, a full story is impossible to grasp; there are always one or more performers speaking. The work is to be watched as well as heard, and this is another overlapping, leaving tne viewer to visually crisscross the stage. When the work does clarify itself at different times, it happens either too briefly or too late in the piece to learn the entire story.

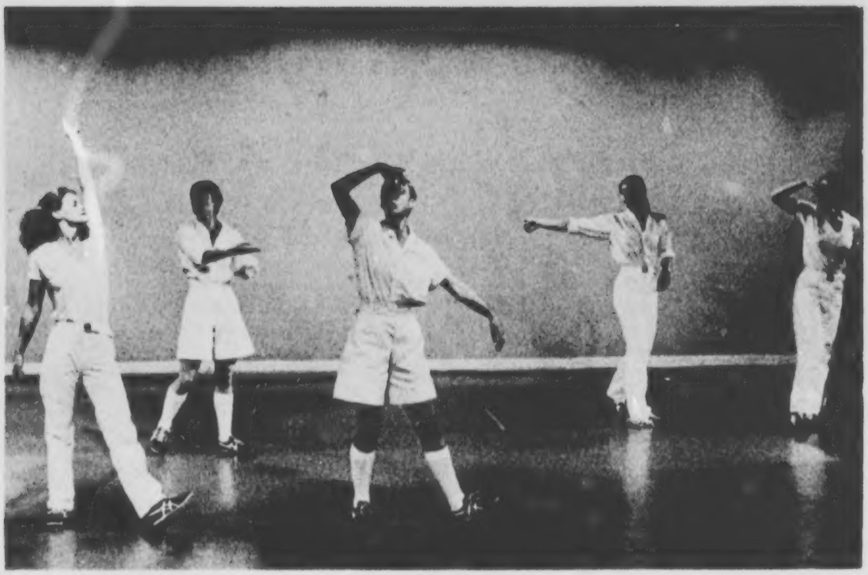
In the spring of 1977, David Gordon performed *What Happened* as a solo at St. Mark's Church. During the summer of 1977 it was performed again at Fêtes Musicales de la Saint-Beaume in Aix-en-Provence. The work was translated into French: Au coin de la rue ou je demeure au-dessus d'un cinq et dix... With a new language and national characteristics and gestures, the work changed, creating another version. With the multitude of languages, the addition and deletion of key words, using several dancers or few, the work can forever express itself anew.



This version of *What Happened* was performed by Valda Setterfield.

THE WORDS:	**THE MOVEMENT:**
On the corner	hands flat, fingers of each hand touching, forming a right angle—
of the street	arms held waist high in front, move inward, forming X—
where I	point one's thumb to oneself—
live	arms thrust downward at each side—
over	one arm makes semicircle overhead—
a five	five fingers at shoulder height—
and ten	ten fingers at shoulder height—
minutes	points to wrist—
to three	two fingers of one hand, followed by three of the other, shoulder height—
I	point one's thumb to oneself—
heard	hand cupped to ear—
the old man	bending forward with hands on small of back, then point to oneself—
say	hands opening and closing as a mouth, held next to mouth—
he was going	thumb pointing off to the side, other arm points to opposite side—
out	pointing diagonally away with right hand—
to sit	semi-squat—
in	forefinger thrust into stomach as performer is hunched over—
the son	pointing to sky with two fingers while looking up—
of an old friend	one arm rounded, parallel to shoulder, hand droops then swoops downward into gesture of a handshake—
of mine	point one's thumb to oneself—
telephoned	head tilted, holding imaginary phone—
my house	thumb points to oneself, then hands shape outline of house beginning with peaked roof—

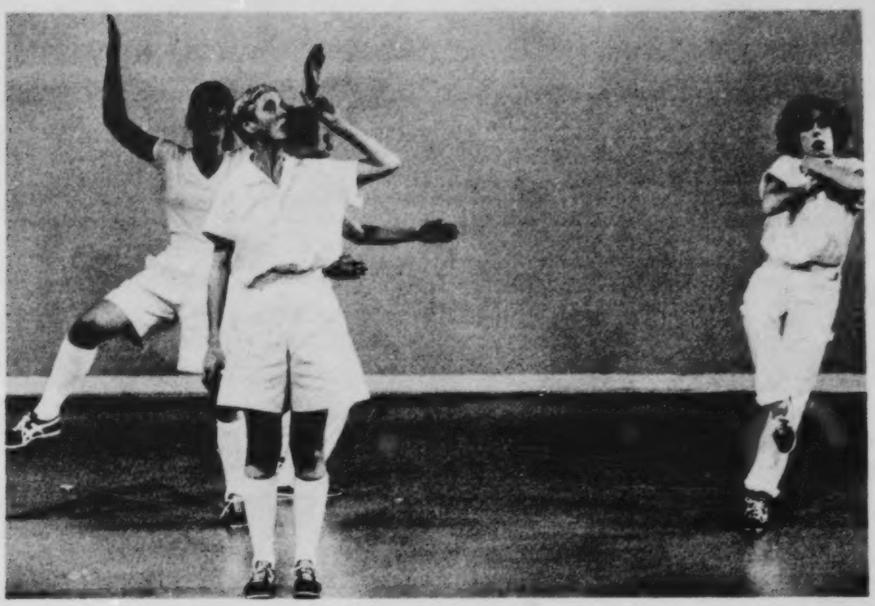
is near	right shoulder up and right arm flat against body—
a four	two fingers of each hand held up—
way	both hands, palms up and cupped, going up and down as if weighing—
crossing	making the Sign of the Cross—
himself	thumb off to side then pointed toward the chest—
he stepped	thumb off to the side, then two steps or more are taken—
out	pointing diagonally off to the side—
into	finger of one hand thrust into stomach, two fingers of other hand are held up—
the street	arms held waist high in front, move inward, forming X—
car	knees bent into walking position, arms parallel to waist, hands flat—
rounded	body pivots—
the corner	hands flat, fingers of each hand touching, forming a right angle—
knocking	fist knocking in air—
at my door	hand turning imaginary knob, then opening imaginary door—
step	two or more steps are taken
lay	lies on back,one leg bent
a small	hand flat, held down at knee height—
baby	arms cradled and rocking—
wrapped around	arms wrap around body, pivots—
the stop	hands held out in front of chest, palms outward—
sign	writing signature in air—
off	brushing something off thigh—
over	arm makes semicircle overhead—
and out	points diagonally away from body—
of my house	thumb points to oneself, hands shape house with peaked roof—



running	jogging in place—
into	finger of one hand thrust into stomach, two fingers of other hand held up—
the son	pointing to sky with two fingers while looking up—
of an old friend	one arm rounded, parallel to shoulder, hand droops then swoops downward into gesture of a handshake—
of mine	point one's thumb to oneself—
was waiting	one leg slightly bent and held rigid—
at the corner	hands flat, fingers of each hand touching, forming a right angle—
for	two fingers of both hands held up—
a street	arms held waist high in front, move inward, forming an X—
car	knees bent into walking position, arms parallel to waist, hands flat—
lurched	body stumbles to side, arms overhead

up	arms thrust upward—
onto	arms up, hands bent over as if grasping onto a ledge—
the side	hand runs down side of body—
walk	body turns to begin walking—
hitting	slaps oneself on face—
the old man	bends forward with hands on small of back, then points to oneself—
who fell	arms circling out of sync, right arm leads into fall, body hits floor, comes to rest on one side—
to the ground	rolls onto back, one leg bent—
was wet	and with bent leg, turns over and stands, shaking hands as if to shake water off—
so I	sewing imaginary stitches and pulls needle up and over head—
picked up	arm swoops to floor, other arm held high—
the baby	arms cradled and rocking—
in time	points to wrist—
to see	hands shaped as circles and held to eyes—
the son	points to sky with two fingers while looking upward—
of and old friend	one arm rounded, parallel to shoulder, hand droops then swoops downward into gesture of handshake—
of mine	thumb points to oneself—
running	jogging in place—
over	arms makes semicircle overhead—
to the old man	two fingers held up, bends forward with hands held on small of back, then points to oneself—
to see	hands shaped as circles, held to eyes—
if he	thumb points off to side—

was hurt	hands clasped, placed on side above hip—
which	cupped hand on nose draws away into hooked shaped nose, arms go up flapping like wings, leg goes up to side, body bends—
was to no	hands crossing each other, pushing away—
avail	hands flat, drawing downward over face—
for	two fingers of each hand raised—
he was beyond	arms twirling out of sync, left hand points to corner of room, right arm straight and right leg bent—
hope	hands clasped as in prayer, held to side of tilted head—
the driver	steering an imaginary wheel—
is punished	right hand slaps top of left hand—
for his crime	hands choking throat—
does not pay	steps to side, rubs thumb and fingers of one hand in the gesture for money—
phone	head tilted, holding imaginary phone—
to	two fingers held up—
call	hand cupped held to mouth—
the baby	arms cradled and rocking—
slim	thumb and forefinger held close together, vertically moving downward from head-high position—
which	cupped hand on nose draws away into hooked shaped nose, arms go up flapping like wings, leg goes up to side, body bends over—
I remember	hand touches forehead, face has thoughtful look—
was the way	thumb points over shoulder, hands are then cupped, going up and down as if weighing—



my	thumb points to oneself—
grandfather	outline a vertical rectangle, circle drawn at its top, forefinger points up then moves clockwise to 3 o'clock, arm swings as pendulum—
always	large circle drawn in air, hands are then cupped, going up and down as if weighing—
wished	hands clasped in front of chest.
"To Be Or Not To Be. . . ."	

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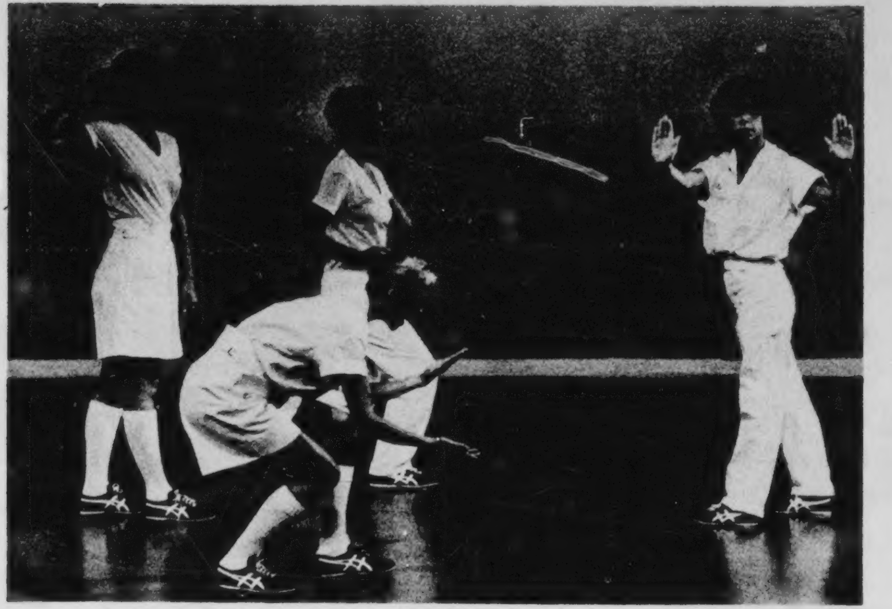
This version of *What Happened* was performed by Christina Svane.

THE WORDS:	**THE MOVEMENT:**
At the corner	hands flat, fingers of each hand touching, forming a right angle—
of the street	arms held waist high in front, move inward, forming an X—
where I	point one's thumb to oneself—
live	arms thrust downward at each side—
a car	knees bent into walking position, arms parallel to waist, hands flat—
ran	jogging in place—
over	one arm makes semicircle overhead—
an old man	bending forward with hands on small of back, then points to oneself—
who fell	arms circling out of sync, right arm leads into fall, body hits floor, comes to rest on one side—
to the ground	rolls onto back, one leg bent—
was wet	and with leg bent, rolls over and stands, shaking hands as if to shake off water—
so I spread a blanket	tossing an imaginary blanket out and down on floor—
and lay down	body turns and lies down on imaginary blanket—
to let the son	still on back, both hands raised and pulls down imaginary sun—
of and old friend	one arm rounded, parallel to shoulder, hand droops then swoops downward into gesture of a handshake—
of mine	point one's thumb to oneself—
have the money	reach in pocket, then the gesture of rubbing fingers and thumb for money—
to go	arm points off to side—
to school	clasped hands, squat, one knee closer to floor than the other—

where	hands held flat, palms up, chest high—
was I	looks to side, baffled, hand goes limp—
searched	moves backwards, tossing imaginary things right and left with both hands—
high and low	with one arm points above with two fingers, then points below—
turning	makes a quarter-turn—
the house	hands shape outline of house beginning with peaked roof—
upside down	both hands go up, then come down sides of body—
and back	hands on small of back and bends over—
to the beginning	(refer to first four moves of this story)
of time	(refer to first four moves of this story)
when man	crossing hands, negating—
was a monkey	scratching under arms, both hands—
at the top	points to ceiling in corner of space—
of the morning	tip one's imaginary hat—
to you	two fingers of one hand held up, points away with other hand—
walked	body turns to begin walking—
all the way	arms create circle, weighing motion of cupped hands going up and down—
here	hands thrust down sides of body—
to see	hands shaped as circles, held to eyes—
out	point diagonally away with right hand—
the window	arms outline a rectangle beginning at top and when reaching bottom, pull imaginary window up—
to see	hands shaped as circles, held to eyes—

if the old man	bending forward with hands on small of back, then points to oneself—
was hurt	hands clasped, placed on side above hip—
which	cupped hand on nose draws away into hooked shaped nose, arms go up flapping like wings, leg goes up to side, body bends—
was to no	hands crossing each other, negating—
avail	hands flact, drawing downward over face—
for	two fingers of each hand raised—
he was beyond	arms twirling out of sync, left hand points to corner of room right arm straight, right leg bent—
hope	hands clasped as in prayer, held to side of tilted head—
the driver	steering imaginary wheel—
is punished	right hand slaps top of left hand—
for his crime	hands choking throat—
does not pay	steps to side, rubs thumb and fingers of one hand in the gesture for money—
for the son	points to sky with two fingers—
of an old friend	one arm rounded, parallel to shoulder, hand droops then swoops downward into gesture of a handshake—
of mine	thumb points to oneself—
to go	arm points off to side—
to school	clasped hands, squat, one knee closer to floor that the other—
where	hands held flat, palms up, chest high—
was I	looks to side, baffled, hand goes limp—
stumbled	right foot behind ankle of left foot and trips forward—

into the back	two fingers thrust in stomach, then hands placed on small of back—
of the van	steering an imaginary wheel—
that hit	slaps oneself on face—
the man	crossing hands, negating—
who fell	arms circling out of sync, right arm leads into fall, body hits floor, comes to rest on one side—
to the ground	rolls onto back, one leg bent—
dead	flat on back—
as a door	hand turning imaginary knob, then opening imaginary door—
you	points away—
with all	large circle drawn in air—
my heart	point thumb at oneself, place hands on heart—
to heart	two fingers raised then places both hands on heart—
talk	hands opening and closing as a mouth next to mouth—
which	cupped hand on nose draws away into hooked shaped nose, arms go up flapping like wings, leg goes up to side, body bends—
would	bends to touch wooden floor—
stop	hands held out in front of chest, palms outward—
him	thumb points to side—
she	thumb points to opposite side—
cried	hands cover face, body circles and is bent forward, performer sobs—
grabbing	arm extended, hand grabbing—
his shirt	pulls on shirt—
as he ran	jogging in place—
to the car	knees bent into walking position, arms parallel to waist, hands flat—

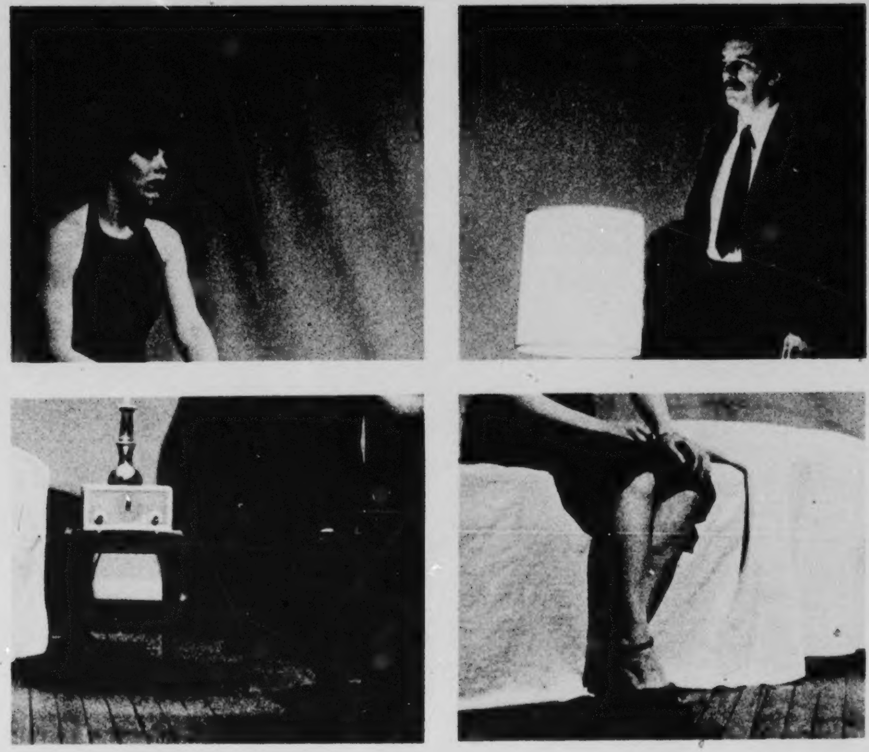


fare	rubs thumb and fingers together in the gesture for money—
to give	gesture for money—
to the son	points upward with two fingers—
of an old friend	one arm rounded, parallel to shoulder, hand droops then swoops downward into gesture of a handshake—
of mine	point one's thumb to oneself—
to go	arm points off to side—
to school	clasped hands, squat, one knee closer to floor than other—
days	back of hand on forehead as if in a daze—
off	brushing something off thigh—
now	arm thrust down side—
hear this	hand cupped to ear—
old man	bends forward with hands on small of back—
was waiting	one leg slightly bent and held rigid—

between	as hand comes from thigh it makes a circle, comes down and goes between legs—
to cross	makes the Sign of the Cross—
the street	arms held waist high in front, move inward forming an X—
car back	car position walking backwards—
up	hand raise overhead—
into	finger of one hand thrust into stomach, two fingers of other hand held up—
the car	knees bent into walking position, arms parallel to waist, hands flat—
of the son	pointing to sky with two fingers while looking up—
of an old friend	one arm rounded, parallel to shoulder, hand droops then swoops downward into gesture of a handshake—
of mine	point one's thumb to oneself—
which	cupped hand on nose draws away into hooked shaped nose, arms go up flapping like wings, leg goes up to side, body bends—
was waiting	car position but not moving—
for	two fingers of both hands held up—
the light	points to light on ceiling—
to turn	makes a quarter-turn—
to go	arm thrust off to side—
to school	clasped hands, squat, one knee closer to floor than the other—
to study	hands open imaginary book—

"To Be Or Not To Be. . . ."

***Burt Barr** is a fiction writer living in New York City.*



Jim Neu's *HIM OR ME*

by Marguerite Oerlemans Bunn

Him or Me: a portrait of a detective drama, the second of Jim Neu's plays to be presented in New York, opened at the Squat Theatre on March 9, 1979. The performers were Nancy Shinkle, Carol Mullins, John Nesci, Jim Neu and Bob Feldman, saxophonist. Recorded music was composed by Lenny Pickett. Bill Wert designed the projections. The play was directed by Jim Neu and John Nesci.

The audience is seated in tiers of seats facing a square, flat performing area which is quite bare. The large storefront window of the Squat Theatre is concealed by a white backdrop that doubles as a screen and onto which slides are projected from backstage. Lighting, pink and white, is projected from overhead and from two downstage side spots. Scene settings are suggested by light and music with a minimum of props—table, chairs, a divan, etc. Characters are nameless stereotype figures reminiscent of the detective movies of the 1940's and 1950's.

The first of the play's five scenes begins in a blackout with delicate, muted electronic music and the projection of slides: two indistinct figures on a deserted street, a city skyline at twilight, a city riverside at sunset, a close-up of a city light.

As a tape recording begins of male and female voices repeating short, disjointed phrases, the two male actors enter from either side of the screen and stand facing each other, expressionless. In the dim light reflected from the projection screen the men slowly move toward and past each other on a slight diagonal as the women enter and stand in the places vacated by the men.

times like this
times like this
times like this
you're not the only one who's had a little trouble

look around
look around
over hear
over hear

far cry
far cry
something's not the same

nice try
nice try
sometimes it's harder to stick around
sometimes it's harder to stick around
it goes without saying
it goes without saying

The tape and the music continue as the four performers, all dressed in street clothes, slowly move back and forth, crossing and recrossing the dark performance area in a reflexive pattern: they pause at the four corners of the space; they walk toward each other; they turn to face the walls; they line up in front of the screen. They neither touch nor acknowledge nor look at one another. The scene ends as, one by one, before slowly exiting, the actors move downstage left to stand briefly under a pink spot while a tape of their own voices is heard:

have more to do with
have more to do with
times like this
I've been to places I only dreamed of

I know
I know
over hear
I've been to places I only dreamed of

you lucked out that time Joan
of all things
of all things
I've been to places I only dreamed of

In scene two, the two men are seated at a table downstage left, drinking and smoking together.

1 *listen*
2 *I've been listening to you a long time*
1 *what you're giving me isn't good enough*
2 *one guy alone*
1 *it seemed alright*
2 *that's a problem*
1 *business is bad*

Throughout the discussion of what seems to be a shady deal south of border, the men not only repeat each other's gestures in unison but they perform in mirror image of each other. They sit side by side. As Jim reaches for his glass with the right hand, John takes his with the left; if John holds his cigarette in his left hand Jim holds his in the right. One man gets up and takes a few steps to the right, the other does the reverse.

1 *you're not giving anything away*
2 *let's say I'm shy*
1 *you're shy and I'm cute*
2 *too bad we're not smart*
1 *you always know what to say*
2 *we haven't found anybody*
1 *maybe we don't*
2 *maybe*
1 *maybe*
2 *business is bad*
1 *it's the same*
2 *so you say*

As the discussion closes, Nancy and Bob Feldman enter. The saxophonist remains center stage; Nancy moves to downstage right. She faces out toward the audience but makes no eye contact with them.

The two men, as they sit almost shoulder to shoulder, continue to mirror each other while they listen to Bob and Nancy give a cool, detached rendition of the song, "Memories of You." Together, the men watch Nancy. Together, they shift focus slightly as both they and Nancy turn toward Bob during his saxophone solo.

Scene three. Downstage right, under a white spot, Nancy sits on a high stool. She is wearing a torch singer's style costume, a lowcut black dress. She begins a monolog that includes phrases heard during the voice-over of the first scene.

A slide of a motel sign is projected. Nancy moves slowly upstage center where now there is a white divan, a lamp and a radio on a small bedside table. Still speaking, she perches on the edge of the bed.

A man's voice is heard from off stage:

> *Jonas says hello*

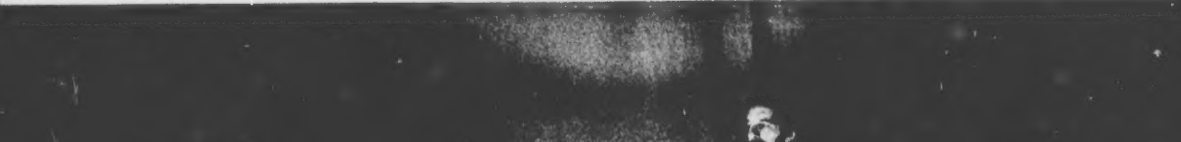
John enters and stands near the bedside table looking down at the woman:

1 *I think you know what I want*
2 *it's nice to be home*
1 *forget that stuff*
2 *I was out all day*
1 *did you see our friend*
2 *I think I went to the movies*
1 *don't give me that*
2 *what was it*
1 *come on*
2 *it must have been*
2 *I know about you*
2 *terrific*
1 *you're buying yourself some real trouble*

During their dialog, the man persistently addresses and looks at Nancy while she barely seems aware of his presence. Her focus is toward but not on him. Their moments of eye contact are very rare. They listen to radio music: the Benny Goodman Sextet playing "I Surrender Dear."

When the man is about to leave, Nancy acknowledges him fully. Together they move downstage and stand facing each other.

1 *sorry for the trouble*
2 *it's really getting very much the same*
1 *let it go*
2 *no harm done*
1 *let it go*
2 *no harm done*
1 *try to understand*
2 *let it go*



Nancy raises a hand toward the man. She seems almost about to touch him but stops her gesture with fingers held a few inches from his chest.

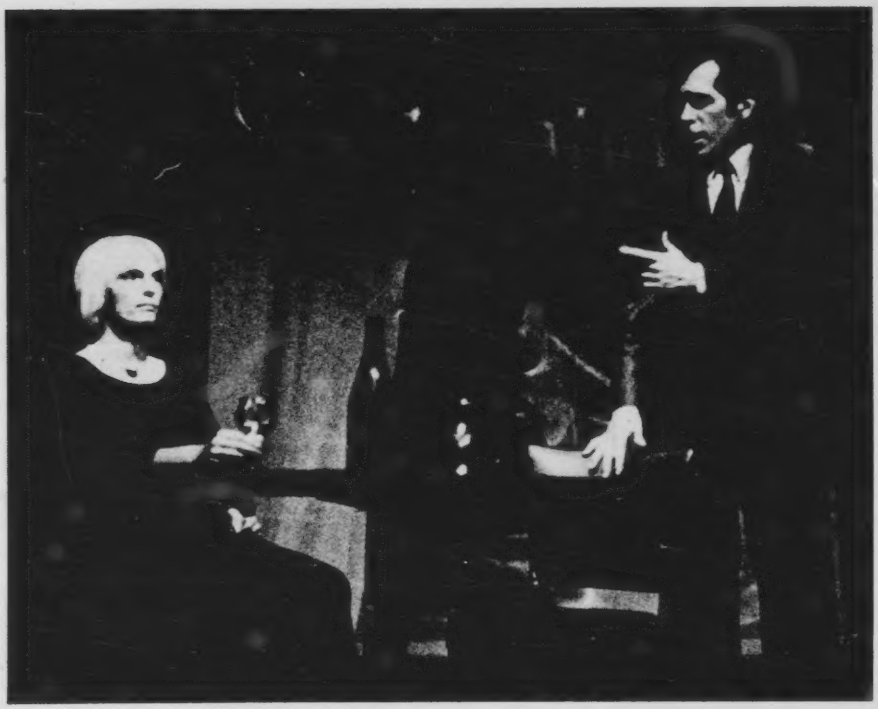
1 *maybe sometime*
2 *let it go*
let it go
just let it go

John looks down at her hand and then turns to leave. Blackout. A slide is shown of a close-up of outstretched fingertips—John's eyeview of Nancy's hand—followed by a slide of a mirror image of John standing behind Nancy as she looks at the reflection of both of them in a mirror.

Scene four. Pink lighting, soft, repetitive electronic music. Downstage center, a table and two chairs. Carol enters slowly and begins to speak. Her lines include some phrases that have already been heard on the tape during the first scene:

sometimes it's harder to stick around
it goes without saying
it goes without saying
sometimes events may conspire
I don't have to go into it

She sits at the table and takes a drink.



A man enters; he holds himself stiffly as he slowly approaches the woman. He looks her over appraisingly, hesitates at the tableside, makes a slow motion pointing or shooting gesture with his left hand, sits down with her and begins a let's-get-to-know-each-other routine:

1 *hi*
2 *yeah*
1 *are you getting low*
2 *I don't mind*
1 *I could use more encouragement*
2 *couldn't we all*
1 *I can tell this better be good*
2 *take it easy partner*
1 *you can count on it*

Both characters appear very cool and self-contained. Gestures are slow and measured. As the dialog progresses, eye contact remains rare. The man stands up and, with a curt jerk of the head, invites the woman to dance. They maintain a space between them, barely touching each other as they slowly move together.

1 *let's get back to you*
2 *maybe I'm part of a play I'm appearing in*
1 *maybe you're part of a case I'm working on*

2 *you've seen a few movies yourself*
1 *Robert Mitchum in* Angel Eyes
2 *whatever you say*
1 *whatever you say*

The repetitive electronic music continues as, contact made and understanding reached, the man and woman slowly exit with arms held loosely around each other's waists. This scene is accompanied by slides of nighttime in the city: neon signs, car headlights, silhouettes of high buildings. Onto the last of these slides the shadows of the men are imposed as they cross backstage between the projector and the screen.

Scene five has one prop—an office desk upstage center just in front of the screen. The men enter from either side of the screen and approach the desk. Moving in mirror image, each man bends forward, pulls open a drawer, takes out a tape recorder and places it on the desk top. Together, one with his right hand, the other with his left, they take out a cassette, press the ejector button and insert the tape into the recorder. They close the drawer. At the same moment, index fingers pointing, they press the recorder start, straighten up and begin to speak:

I can't use the telephone
I have to talk
It doesn't always pay to get involved
I try to make it pay
I look into things for people
I take care of things for people
I can't use the telephone
I have to talk

The text is delivered as a double monolog with one actor slightly out of sync with the other. In the first half it is Jim who leads and John who echoes just a word or so behind. The movements and gestures, however, are completely in unison. As the double monolog progresses, the performers move up and down and across the performance area in mirror image of each other. Together, they sit on the desk edge, loosen their ties, brush back their hair. Each man performs as though alone. There is no focusing of attention on each other; no direct eye contact.

At midpoint, having reached the desk, both men pause briefly and lean forward over the recorders. Then, as they move downstage together and begin to talk again, it is John who takes the verbal lead and Jim who echoes him.

The story
The story you have
Has been rolled up
Packed tight
and slipped between your lips
Got a light lieutenant?
Sometimes I don't know what I'm saying
You'd be surprised what goes on
California has more people related to household names than
any other place in the world
Sometimes I don't know what I'm saying
I'm blocked at the pocket and I can't find a shot

When the report to the lieutenant is finished, the actors stand at either end of the desk and bend forward over the tape recorder. Their hands are resting on the corners of the desk; their ties are hanging vertically. They hold this mirror-image pose while a slide of them side by side is projected on the screen. This double image is followed quickly by all the slides of the performance projected in reverse order.

The play ends as it began with a recorded voice repeating disconnected phrases, muted electronic music and an indistinct image of two figures on a deserted street. Performance time is one hour.

● ● ●

Jim Neu began writing some of the material for *Him or Me: a portrait of a dectective drama* over a year ago when he was filling his notebooks with scenes and dialogs all centered around a detective theme. At that time, he had no direct plans to present them but, when the opportunity did arise, he finished and edited two scenes—the bar scene and the one which, in performance, became a double monolog. These scenes were presented as part of *Riding the Right Horse*, an arrangement of work by different artists, given in California in 1978.

In expanding his two scenes into *Him or Me* by the addition of three more scenes, Neu decided to continue with the detective theme and to use the characters in as many different but related contexts as possible:

> *I had begun to think in terms of settings and what are the things that would recur when you think of all the detective movies and all the detective novels you have ever experienced. What are the things that you can identify as recurring very very often? One is certainly a nightclub or a room in a hotel. More often a motel. Certainly an office. I think also that the waterfront street scene at the beginning of the piece is something anybody would identify or could recognize in that experience.*

In arranging the works for *Riding the Right Horse*, the order of the separate segments and the smooth transition from one scene to another had to be carefully worked out. With *Him or Me*, also, the scenes having been conceived separately and in relation to a central theme rather than related casualy to each other, the problematics of order and scene structure became a major esthetic concern.

> *There were questions about the order of those scenes; they could have been done in a number of different ways. Almost all the way through I was intending to put the scene that is last at the beginning because it is like the commencement of a movie where a guy comes in and talks about something and the rest of the movie is a flashback to what he is talking about. But through working it out and running it and listening to feedback from John Nesci, we made the order as it was finally performed.*

The scenes take place in locales that are merely indicated by a few props. Soft lighting, a table and chairs, drinks and music suggest a bar. The anonymity of a bed, a bedside table, a lamp and a radio are clarified by the slide of a motel sign. A desk, center stage, sets the office scene. A slide and the actors in outdoor clothing situate the first scene on a city street at night.

The characters are all nameless, without past or future. Their only presence is in the here-and-now; their only interaction with each other is through a particular style of apparently alogical speech.

Him or Me, then, is essentially a series of scenes without narrative, without character development or plot, without, in general, the logical use of meaningful dialog. For Jim Neu, the unifying element to this work is the language. In performance, he emphasizes the reflexive relationships within the text itself and between it and the various theatrical elements—performers, music, slides, props.

Neu builds his dialog in short stychomythic phrases that, for the most part, are only fragments of normal sentences and which, individually, seem to have no immediate connection one with the other. Generally accepted sense relationships between phrases and statements are either absent altogether or are merely suggested. The construction of a speech sense mechanism within the scenes or between the scenes becomes a variable that depends less on what the words themselves mean than on their context and how they are delivered during the performance.

Occasionally, a group of phrases will be tightly related, the meaning of one responding directly to what went before or having a logical connection with the phrase that follows. In the strangers-meet-in-a-bar scene, there are moments when the man and the woman converse in speech that is clearly to the point:

tell me about yourself
Claire Trevor in Murder My Sweet
you should meet a friend of mine
what does your friend do
he's a watcher
do you have a lot of friends
we were talking about you.

But this type of immediately comprehensible speech is rarely heard during the performance. Here, Neu has used it with a special intention: this is one of the few scenes—if not the only one—where two characters actually acknowledge and touch each other.

> *Well, we are the people that end up together in the piece. No specific meaning in that except that the lines have a meaning also. The lines in that particular scene meet in a way that they don't necessarily meet in other scenes... But we'd reached some understanding, you know. If I'm going to be Robert Mitchum in* Angel Eyes *to her, she can be Claire Trevor in* Murder My Sweet *to me.*

More typical examples of Neu's dialogs, where people and lines "don't necessarily meet," could be selected from any scene of the play. This is part of the exchange from the motel scene where the male visitor tries to pry information from the torch singer:

Jonas says hello
terrific
I think you know what I want
it's nice to be home
forget that stuff
I was out all day
did you see our friend
I think I went to the movies
don't give me that
what was it
come on
it must have been
I know about you
terrific

Neu tries to build his texts in such a way that their power stems as much from the architecture and the musicality of the phrase as from the words themselves. In performance, his characters are of a family as they continually exchange short phrases, phrases that are often repeated again and again:

you're not being very much help
yesterday was a movie
hey you're not kidding are you
yesterday was a movie
hey you're not kidding are you
yesterday was a movie
hey you're not kidding are you
yesterday was a movie
hey you're not kidding are you
yesterday was a movie
hey you're not kidding are you
yesterday was a movie
hey you're not kidding are you
yesterday was a movie
hey you're not kidding are you
it's nice to be home

Phrases that reflect each other in length:

you think something's going on
give me a break
there could be a solution for both of us
both of us
both of us
I'll tell you what I told me
tell me something I don't know
I'll tell you what I told him
tell me something I don't know
it's a good thing I don't have to like you

Phrases that derive their meanings from situation, character and familiarity rather than conventional word sense.

For Neu, conventional meanings aren't the point. He finds literal sense in language "too limiting" for what he wants to do with words and for the effects he aims at achieving in performance. The continuity of his dialogs is rhythmical. Phrases reflect each other not only in their number of words but in tone, expression, and speed of delivery. The repetitions set up echoing sound effects that may be broken by a pause or a silence or a phrase of a different rhythm, length or tonal quality. Neu wants his language to have a musicality that defines situations and that establishes relationships between characters.

For most of his theatrical career, Jim Neu has performed and worked with Robert Wilson, and he acknowledges the ongoing influence this experience has had on his work. He remembers the rehearsals for *A Letter for Queen Victoria* where the line readings were accompanied by a live string quartet. It was during the first run of this piece, in Italy, that Neu became the most acutely aware of the musical relationships that existed not only between the performers and the string quartet but between the performers themselves as they delivered their lines.

In working to develop a similar musical sensitivity between the performers of *Him or Me*, Neu always rehearsed with music. The composer, Lenny Pickett, read the dialogs and came to line readings before writing and synthesizing the music. Throughout the performance, the structural and repetitive qualities of the lines are reflected in the music. In some segments, the music has a linear development, but in others, in the bar scene between Carol and Jim, for example, it is recorded on a loop and consists of the same brief musical phrases, sometimes as short as 30 seconds, being repeated over and over and over again. Neu feels that the loop music substantially alters the texture of the work and is particularly sensitive and appropriate to his material because it reinforces the time suspension effect he wants to develop. Neu incorporated into his piece the live saxophone music played by Bob Feldman, not only as a contrast to the electronic music and direct reference to the period he was suggesting, but also to demonstrate how with music, as with words, it is possible to transcend accepted meaning and emotion in order to explore different relationships and create different dynamic tensions. In performance, Neu particularly appreciated Feldman's capacity to create a musical style that placed an effective distance between himself and the conventional sentimentality of the song "Memories of You."

In his own work, Neu wants his dialogs to have a musicality that, while unifying the performers' delivery of the lines, sets both them and the audience at an unusual distance from the words. He would like to invite audiences to listen, to give them the opportunity to hear different possible ways of special communication and, most essentially, to leave them spaces within which to make their own connections.

Throughout rehearsals, with Lenny Pickett's music as a background, the actors worked to increase their sensitivity to the sound of the lines and to develop musical relationships between the lines and between each other. They deliberately tried to remove the content of the words and to avoid using expressive emphasis. In practice, however, the tensions and emotions between the performers were such that it was impossible to completely neutralize all of the dialogs all of the time. As with the text, then, where there are instances of direct verbal response that come and go, Neu decided to balance them by letting rare moments of emotional expression come and go in performance.

Again, in order to emphasize the words, movement, gesture and facial expression are reduced to the minimum. The actors aimed at a comprehension of situation and an empathy with character combined with a physical stillness.

> *I wanted all the actors to be comfortable and this involved repeating the lines many many times in rehearsal. I wanted their voices to sound comfortable with the lines and I wanted their bodies to be comfortable when they were saying them. I wanted them to look natural, unstrained, and to have the same qualities in their voice. One works with the other. You can't be up there on stage feeling all stiff and bunched up without it affecting the voice.*
>
> *Most of the time the actors sat. They were static in their places for long periods of time. I wanted to leave the performance space quiet and open enough to actually just hear the words. It is a very difficult thing to achieve sometimes, to really just have the actors say the words without giving them all this emotional content or performed gesture.*

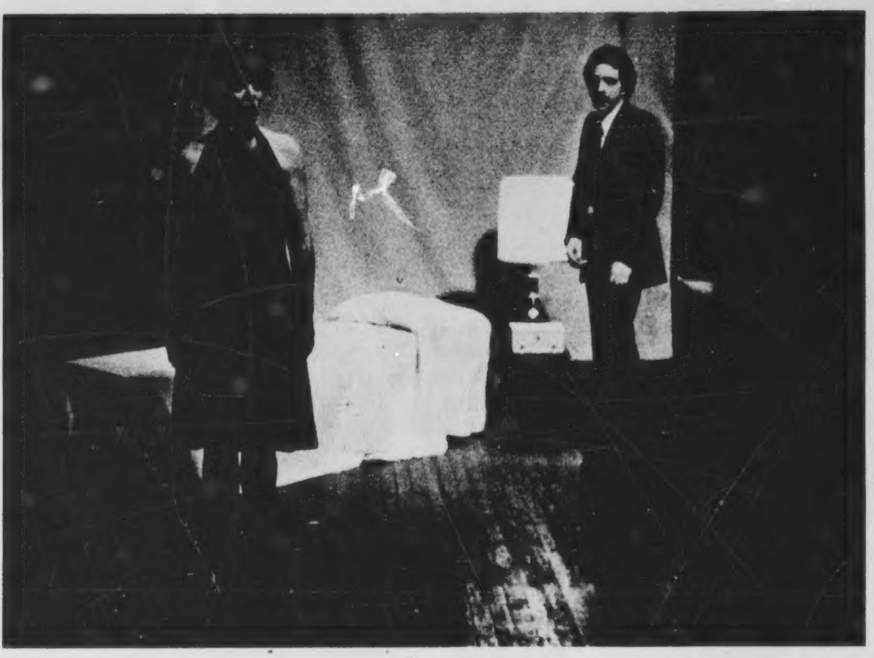
In performance, *Him or Me* does have a quality of physical stillness, such that, by their very rarity, movements and gestures draw particular attention to themselves and take on additional significance in relation to each other. In the second scene, as the saxophone solo begins, Nancy and the two men turn to watch the musician. The slight shift of body and focus creates a whole different set of tensions between the performers as well as between them and the audience.

The motel scene, too, is quite static. Most of the time, the man stands looking down at the woman as she sits perched on the side of the bed. Both actors seem almost locked into their positions. As the words and phrases move back and forth between them, the physical space that separates the performers from each other is reflected in the silences, the suspensions and the disconnected structure of the dialog.

start at the beginning
you don't know what you're asking
where have I heard that before
I'm trying to remember
you could be acting
I'm doing the best I can
does 1947 mean anything to you
I feel like I missed the boat
Jonas sent me
wonderful
it says fell or pushed
I did miss the boat

The distancing effect of the language and the acting is reinforced in performance by the almost total absence of eye contact and physical closeness. The characters seem to exist in spaces of still isolation with only the briefest of points where one acknowledges the presence of the other. Eye contact and touching, instead of being casual everyday motions, become moments of intense interaction.

Initially in the motel scene, it isn't clear from the language whether Nancy knows that John is in the room or not. She refers often to "you," but she could be talking to herself, continuing the monolog that begins the scene and only accidentally leaving



spaces for John's interrogative lines. The moments when she does meet his regard or when she does almost touch him work to modify the situation and their relationship within it.

> *I did want her to acknowledge him at those times. I did want people to see that they were actually together. At least at those moments they saw each other. They did come together very strongly with a gesture at the end. I mean—it is a strength which is there because it is absent in a way.*

At the end of this scene, Nancy almost touches John, which is followed immediately by a slide of her outstretched fingertips. A fragmentary mirror image that reemphasizes the physical space between them, the limitations of their relationship and the disconnected nature of their verbal exchanges.

Jim Neu works further with the detached quality of his dialogs to create echoing effects and frequent mirror images. As with his first play, *Echo Ranch*, he develops the repetitive structure of his text by having the performers repeat recurring lines within one scene or by having different performers repeat the same line at various stages of the performance. For Neu, this type of language structure is "logical." In discussing the repetition of lines he states:

> *Well, I didn't arbitrarily decide which lines to repeat. When I came to lines, for example, like Nancy saying "yesterday was a movie" and John replying "hey, you're not kidding are you," it just seemed to me to be a logical point to say it again and again and again. People may be irritated by that kind of repetition but that was not my intention. I wanted to say those words and I wanted to repeat those words. I felt they were appropriate to the piece and appropriate to*

> *the scene, and that's the basis I made my judgment on rather than some idea of what effect the lines would have.*

Neu is acutely sensitive to the effects of media input on social interaction. He refers to the all-pervasive models that determine so many styles of modern behavior, that lock people/characters into fixed forms of communication, that provoke doubling and mirror action, that allow for the dissociation of language, gesture and emotion. The performance of *Him or Me* makes use of all these influences to multiply the internal references to the detective theme, to create *a portrait of a detective drama* that is a complex, multifaceted entity. In choosing to use archetypal cultural characters in familiar situations, Neu is able to work from and on the expectations of the audience; he can create a closed personal world but one which, by its theme, becomes less inaccessible.

> *We all get these models through those very powerful, very artfully made movie productions of the 40's and 50's. We all have these models in our heads because they are so vivid, and having seen them often determines how people act. It gives them a style to be. This material of* Him or Me *is partially about dealing with some of the media inputs that we have had for generations now. But if you are asking about why one guy is reflecting another, it is because he is dealing with these models that are pervasive in the detective genre and in the western.*

The detective theme unifies the scenes and places the archetypal characters in comprehensible situations. *What* they are is a given; *who* they are specifically is immaterial.

Language is at the center of the play, and it is from the unique structure of the language that the intricate web of performance relationships arises. The repetitive, disconnected qualities of the text are reflected throughout the piece by the echoing effect of line delivery, by the mirroring of physical action and gesture, by the continued repetition of musical phrases and visual images. Slides show repeated images of actions, images of mirror images, fragmented images of petrified gesture. In a musical reference, the whole performance is given a loop effect when the slides are flipped through in reverse order and the slide image of the beginning becomes the slide image of the end. The quiet, unruffled performance style, the minimalization of gesture, the lack of emphasis on emotion and facial expression, all serve to afford a smooth performance surface/space for the unhampered interaction of the complex reflexive language devices.

But if the internal referential material is articulated within the performance to draw the audience in and to give an effect of suspended time, the elaboration of the larger cultural references causes an expansion of time awareness. Consciousness moves back and forth in time and space not only between the archetypal figures of the movies but to a whole body of literature, theatre and music, to the mysteries of the past and to the intricacies of modern political sleuthing. This, ideally, is what Neu sees as the function of theatrical language.

In his own dialogs he wants to be economical, imagistic and suggestive. He wants to keep his language open enough so that audiences are free to make associations, free to stop being concerned with making *the* connection, free to make their *own, other* connections.

Neu works with his particular language structure, with the mirror and echo effects, with the quiet, contained acting style, not so much to evoke an atmosphere of alienation and distance as to create a sense of openness and space where association and imagination can have free rein.

> *We communicate in so many different ways. Verbally is just one of them. If you have a dialog it has as much to do with what your*

> *hand is doing and how you are presenting what you are saying as it has to do with the content of the words. Within the action you can make a space and you can have people hear things. You can clean out the space and make them hear things that they just haven't heard before... If you leave it open enough, audiences have a chance to think on their own. To get into a piece and use their own imagination. I love it. I love that kind of energy in the theatre.*

Marguerite Oerlemans Bunn *is a graduate student in the NYU Department of Drama, specializing in the semiotics of performance.*

The Theatre of Mistakes

by Robb Creese

More than five years ago, a group of young English artists formed a workshop in London under the direction of Anthony Howell. This group, eventually to be known as the Theatre of Mistakes, uses improvisational exercises—strictly controlled by formal structure—to develop performances.

Howell concedes that he was influenced in particular by an exercise of the Living Theatre, used in *Paradise Now*, in which one person performed an action and another copied it. The interaction was far more interesting to Howell than anything the traditional theatre could offer. And he also felt that this exercise was more significant than the "histrionics" of the Living Theatre because it implied a new means of working in a group to create performance art.

For the next two years, such concepts as repetition of each other's actions were used as the basis for exercises for the group, and performances were built from chosen exercises.

The Theatre of Mistakes' first major performance was *Preparation and Displacement,* constructed for the Cambridge Poetry Festival in England, 1975. *The Street,* a work of sixty performers done environmentally on a street in Kentish Town, London, was performed in July 1975. This was followed by *Ascent of the Stedelijk* in Amsterdam, 1976, and *Scenes at a Table: Homage to Pietro Longhi* (Serpentine Gallery) in 1977. *A Waterfall,* a 48-day presentation, was done at the Hayward Gallery in London in 1977. And *Going*—which has toured Scotland, Paris, Belgrade, Bristol and Pittsburgh—was most recently seen at the Theatre for the New City in New York in late 1978. The group plans to perform works in America, Australia, Europe, and England in the next two years.

A conceptual approach to performance art has been important to the Theatre of Mistakes. Space, time, and movement are the themes that come out of the exercises. Rarely have nonconceptual ideals infiltrated the performances of the group. Rather than telling stories or stating themes, their work presents ideas. For example, a performance might be constructed from actors copying each other's walks, speaking very quickly, using a round performance space—"rules" determined before work began.

The basic *units* of performance, the exercises developed in their first two years of working together, were catalogued by Anthony Howell and another member of the company, Fiona Templeton. In *Elements of Performance Art,* a few hundred copies of which were published for use by the company, simple "building blocks" are listed with suggestions about how they may be constructed into performances.

For example, the booklet suggests ways that people can relate to physical space: horizontally, vertically; moving fast, moving slowly. Improvisations are constructed when a group chooses which exercises are allowed in the improvisation. The rules are set up before the performance.

Elements of Performance Art is a reduction of improvisation rules to their simplest form. The rules of the exercises are extremely varied. Before any workshop or performance there are many options open to the group.

A section called "Body Speed and Travelling Speed" sets down two continua:

Slow
—
—
—
—
Fixed Spot——————————Travelling
—
—
Fast

Four rules can be constructed:

1. *Perform any body exercise slowly as a means of travelling across any distance.*
2. *Perform any body exercise fast as a means of travelling across any distance.*
3. *Perform any body exercise slowly while remaining at a fixed spot in space.*
4. *Perform any body exercise fast while remaining at a fixed spot in space.*

Two possible solutions to the problem of staying on a fixed spot in space are offered:

1. *Keep at least one part of the body at any time in contact with a fixed spot (e.g. if leaning away from that spot).*
2. *Keep the center of gravity above a fixed spot (e.g., jumping off that spot or standing with one foot on either side of that spot, etc.).*

And the guide book offers two further bits of advice:

1. *Perform the possibility that best expresses the exercise, and perform it consistently.*
2. *Remember that the body can move fast while one is travelling slowly and move slowly while one is travelling fast.*

Elements of Performance Art offers exercises for body positions as well. In an exercise called "Angles/Curves," which was useful especially in *Homage to Pietro Longhi*, Howell and Templeton suggest to performers:

1. *Take up any position that employs one angle (and its complement). One at a time, add angles equal to the original angle.*

OR

2. *Take up any position that employs one curve (and its complement). One at a time, add curves equal to the original curve.*

They add, "Equal angles or curves may be two-dimensional—parallel or symmetrical limbs viewed from one sightline—or three dimensional—in any direction from any sightline."

Another exercise that is often used in the work is called "Horizontal and Vertical Exercise," in which any number of performers choose between two options:

1. *Be horizontal, either on your back or on your front, legs together, arms by sides.*
2. *Be vertical, feet together, arms by sides.*

A performer is instucted to do only 1 (i.e., use only horizontal positions), or only 2 (i.e., use only vertical positions), or to alternate between the two (quickly switching from vertical to horizontal), or to use several positions from 1 and from 2, (using several horizontal positions then several vertical).

The body positions are set in space with two further choices:

1. *Be horizontal and parallel or at 90° to any edge or straight demarcation of the performance space or along any radius of a circular performance space.*
2. *Be vertical at any space that is on an imaginary line between you and another performer..., the line to run parallel or 90° to any edge or straight demarcation of the performance space or along any radius of a circular performance space.*

Two other suggestions are made for the exercise:

1. *If changing from a horizontal to a vertical position (or vice versa), employ a consistent method of moving for the transition.*
2. *Choose a "trigger" in order to decide when to start and when to cease performing this exercise, or when to start and when to cease performing any or all parts of this exercise.*

This canon of possibilities covers use of body, sounds, time and space, equipment, and "manifestation," or approaches to performance. The catalog of choices has been used to generate thousands of exercises and variations. All of the performances of the Theatre of Mistakes have been based on work with such exercises. But they have been extremely varied in their presentation and in their content.

The Theatre of Mistakes suggests measurements of time and space within a performance be measured in terms of the performance itself. For example, yards can be measured as performers' strides and feet by their steps; minutes are replaced by the time perod one can hold one's breath; seconds are measured by counting beats or speaking metrical lines. "A company of artists," Howell and Templeton write, "may perform below an oak tree, in the shade cast by that oak tree, for as long as it takes for one of them to climb up to the top of that oak tree."

The use of the measurements of time within the performance itself has led the Theatre of Mistakes to develop the use of performers "as metronomes." "A performance may last the time it takes for one performer to move along a set route," they say, "each turn that the performer makes may constitute the end of one act and the beginning of another." In such works as *Table Piece, Homage to Pietro Longhi* and *Going*, and act was defined as the period of time it took one performer—the metronome—to walk the sides of the square performance space.

• • •

The Theatre of Mistakes does not feel any compulsion to act. The "drama" of their performance comes from each performer's efforts at "extending" his or her own behavior by using exercises. The plays are "about" their real lives dealing with the exercises during any given performance for as long as it lasts. Their goal is *action*, not *acting as if*.

"Amplification of the present" demands that actions not be preconceived but spontaneous; yet they must stay within established rules, such as time, space, number of performances, number of exercises, etc. For example, a rule might be made that men would have to walk backwards whenever a woman was speaking. Or a scene would end as soon as an actress finished counting backwards from one thousand, or performers could only speak in French if a passerby happened to be wearing red.

One of the most important exercises became "being someone else." "Let one performer attempt to repeat the behavior of another," one reads in *Elements of Performance Art*. This is "an attempt 'to be each other,' rather than acting and pretending to enact a character." The activity of building performances by repeating actions set down by an "instigator" (the term used by the group to describe the person who introduces new material to a performance), became a central concept for most of the Theatre of Mistakes' presentations.

The Theatre of Mistakes worked at first with very simple actions that could easily be imitated. As they became more adroit at copying one another's actions, they used increasingly complicated behavior. Chains of actions became longer, and there even entered into the exercises the possibility for sabotage of the other performers (i.e., a performer would initiate extremely complicated actions, for example, singing a high note for 35 seconds, and the other actors would not be able to repeat the action), and the probability that there would be "mistakes" (not being able to sing the note, for example)—hence, the *Theatre of Mistakes*.

Mistake-making became an integral part of the performances. Various signals were developed for use after mistakes were made. The signals would both alert a performer to his error and lend drama to the performance. One of the common signals that a mistake was made was a swoon. If a sequence of actions became impossible, a performer would simply cry out and fall lifeless to the floor. In *Homage to Pietro Longhi*, for example, a malevolent instigator set down actions that were to be performed on tiptoe. Many a "swoon" resulted after twenty minutes when other performers could not keep up the rigorous demands of the instigator.

Signals were developed to let performers correct mistakes made by others. In *Going*, someone who detected an error in structure would cry out, "Hold it!", at which point all performers froze; the critical performer would physically carry their frozen bodies to their correct positions. Then they would shout "Okay!" to signal the others to continue the performance.

Form is strictly adhered to (the form is the sum total of rules of time, space, words, etc. established before the performance), without regard to the effect on the audience. The structure is more important than communication of themes to the audience. Although narrative is never preplanned, if it should flow from the exercises, the Theatre of Mistakes will let it develop (so long as all performance rules are maintained). For example, in *The Street* a rule was made that if a passerby walked in a particular direction on the street, everyone would swoon and fall to the street. Many Londoners felt there was a "theme" of violence, which was not planned but left in the performance nonethelesss.

The Street

An early work of the Theatre of Mistakes, *The Street* concentrated on simple structures for performance by many people in the London neighborhood where Anthony Howell lived in July of 1975. They worked on the performance for six months.

The Street was a chain of exercises performed outdoors. There was no theme, except perhaps time, space and flow patterns. The only "contents" of the performance were the comings and goings of Ascham Street itself. There was no story or plot to *The Street*. It was an improvisatory performance that used only elements found in the neighborhood. No extraneous information was allowed to enter the performance: it was "about" the street. For example, the actions performed were such things as sweeping, carrying groceries, watering flowers, and other things that would be seen on a typical day in London.

The sixty performers were free to improvise but only when it was their turn. A very complicated chart was constructed by Howell so that each performer knew when he or she would enter the performance. The actions, which at first were very simple (long-held freezes, many repetitions, etc.), became increasingly complex because the "ordinary people" became more and more skillful.

All of the words that were used in the piece were spoken on the street during the first ten minutes of the performance. Performers placed in windows along the street wrote down what they heard: neighborhood banter, questions about the performance, compliments and pleasantries, obscenities when an angry neighbor yelled out his window one day. Then the writers of the text structured the words into fourteen-line sonnets, canons, and other verse forms. Thus the first ten minutes of the play were used to gather words and gestures and the rest to recreate them in new forms: the people of the neighborhood acted as initiators of actions that were copied by the company. All of the performances were different because different words were overheard each day.

Rules set down before the performance gave it structure. For example, performers always walked on the left side of the street. Some performers acted only in the street and others stayed in windows along the side. The performance was limited to one full block of the street, so neighbors and passersby would be involved unwittingly in the performance. As the group worked out their actions and gestures, people would shout at them or come up and interrupt to see what was happening; they would walk through the street and thus were sometimes part of the performances.

Waterfall Three

To the spectators, there was a feeling of genuine order, but this order was too complicated to figure out unless one had been in contact with the group. Neighborhood people became increasingly friendly. Even the hostile ones often warmed to the group when they realized their insults had become sonnets repeated throughout the piece.

The Waterfall

The Waterfall was performed over a forty-eight day period at the Annual Exhibition of the Hayward Gallery in London in 1977. The action was to raise water from a bucket on the ground to another empty, elevated bucket, one cup at a time. Each performer used two cups to transfer the water upward, each pouring his or her water into another performer's cup simultaneously with the others. The performance ended as all the water was poured carefully into the bucket left on the ground.

Each day the piece became more complex by adding performers, increasing the height of the set, and expanding the verse that was used. The performance also grew longer each day it was performed. It took about thirty minutes to fill the top bucket with water on the forty-eighth day.

Scenes at a Table: Homage to Pietro Longhi, a piece begun in the summer of 1975, was a series of improvised actions and words. Performers took turns inventing actions (which included gestures and words). Each performance was therefore different.

In each act, the instigator (i.e., the actor who improvised actions for the others to copy) performed what the group calls "Primary Scenes." The audience would never know what to expect, since there was no restriction whatsoever on what actions actors could initiate. Then other performers, one at a time, would copy the instigator's actions.

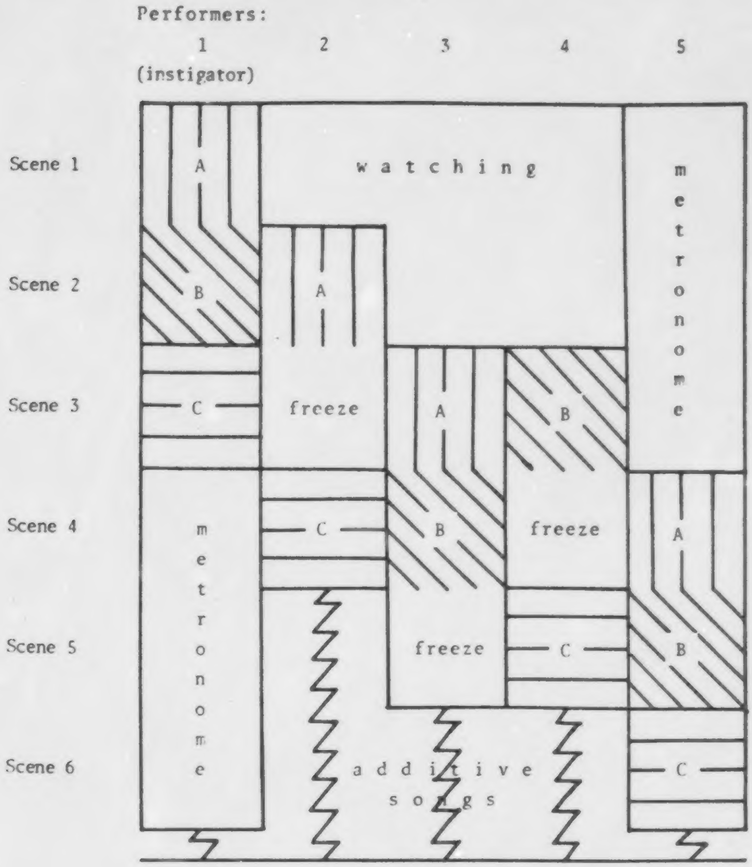
The audience felt as if a fugue were playing. In other words, after Performer One had created action A, he would invent action B. Meanwhile, Performer Two would join the scene, recreating action A. Then three actors would be involved, then four.

One performer always moved around the outside boundaries of the square performance space. He or she, a different performer in each act, would usually stare at the actions being performed by the others. This person was the Metronome, who controlled the length of the scene. He or she would indicate when the scene was over by reaching the starting place on the square. This function, however, was unclear to the audience. The Metronome seemed to be a strange spectator moving about the space.

Since actors were not limited in what they improvised, they used exaggerated postures and gestures, which changed from performance to performance. There were many awkward positions that were obviously very difficult to mimic, postures that were off balance or done on tiptoe, for example. In some performances, there were numerous costume changes, involving many hats, coats, gloves, and other articles of clothing. Each performer would execute exactly the same complicated sequence of costume changes as the others.

No consideration was taken of whether the audience could see all of the actors at any given moment. Many times the spectators would not be able to see all the performers because they would stand in front of each other. There was, however, a strong feeling of three-dimensions in the work. A viewer had a sense of performers being close by, far away, and in between. The feeling of depth created was reminiscent of Pietro Longhi's paintings.

The way in which the performance was constructed was extremely complex. (There was a strong clash between rigid structure and improvisation). A diagram is very helpful:


Performers:
1
2
3
4
5
(instigator)
Scene 1
Scene 2
Scene 3
Scene 4
Scene 5
Scene 6
A
watching
metronome
B
A
C
freeze
A
B
metronome
C
B
freeze
A
freeze
C
B
additive songs
C

A,B & C = *actions & words*

ONE ACT

To imitate other actor's actions, the performers needed moments when they were not doing anything, "spaces" during which they could stand still and watch segments they would have to imitate. That is why watching is included in the diagram.

"A", "B", and "C" indicate actions and words. The five performers in turn improvise new actions and dialog for the drama. Thus, the audience sees what might be called a rehearsal process.

In Scene 1, Performer One improvises a series of words and/or actions. These are called "A". Performers Two, Three and Four watch carefully, for they must repeat

"A". Performer Five is the "metronome": he or she walks around the performance space to control the length of the scene.

Scene 2. Performer Two recreates "A" as One did it. One improvises or instigates "B" (words and actions). Three and Four watch. Five is still the metronome.

Scene 3. Three and Four enter the scene. One improvises "C" (words and actions). Two must freeze to watch One's actions. Three repeats "A". Four repeats "B". Five is still the metronome.

Scene 4. One becomes the metronome. Two repeats "C". Three repeats "B". Four freezes to watch Two doing "C". Five does "A", which he or she has watched while being the metronome.

Scene 5. Two does "additive songs" while Three freezes and Four repeats "C". Five repeats "B". (No one does "A".)

Scene 6. Two continues additive songs. Three and Four begin additive songs. Five repeats "C".

This diagram represents one act. For the next four acts, the performers changed their starting positions onstage (and on the diagram).

The same diagram is pertinent for *The Table*, a piece performed about the same time, and for *Going*. The three works are thought of by the group as a trilogy.

In *Homage to Pietro Longhi*, a scene has taken place, in effect, among three characters played by five people. One can never know who is playing whom, for everyone "plays" at being everyone else. Hence, the structure has superceded the individual performers and the individual characters.

In developing *Homage to Pietro Longhi*, the Theatre of Mistakes used the Angles/Curves exercise of Howell and Templeton's book. Performers used angular postures inspired by the 18th-Century paintings of Pietro Longhi, who is known for creating many variations of a single posture in many different paintings. He has been the inspiration for much of the work done by the Theatre of Mistakes. He is especially useful also because many of his paintings are studies of people seated around tables and he often painted Goldoni's commedia dell'Arte characters, capturing the postures of the actors of the day.

Going

Going was a direct response to *Homage to Pietro Longhi*. The group decided to create an *idealized* performance that would use the same structures but which was fully rehearsed and choreographed to minute details. Even some "mistakes" would be performed intentionally—showing what happened when the structures broke down. The Time Diagram for *Homage to Pietro Longhi* also applies to *Going*; the basic structure is the same, with performers adding scenes and "copying" each other in the same way.

Like *Homage to Pietro Longhi*, *Going* is played on square marked out on the floor. The setting is very simple: two chairs and a table. A cigarette packet and a book of matches lie on the table. Above each corner of the square hangs a light fixture with an on/off cord dangling from it. These are the only illumination for the performance, and only one of the lights is on in each act.

As successive lights are used, progressing clockwise, the table and chairs are turned to face them, so that the relationship between the furniture—one chair behind the table and one to its right—and the illuminated corner of the square remains the same. The blocking of actors relates to the furniture rather than to the audience. Thus the setting and the performers orient successively toward a different corner of the square in each act; Act 5 faces in the same direction as Act 1—toward the single audience section if a proscenium arrangement is used.

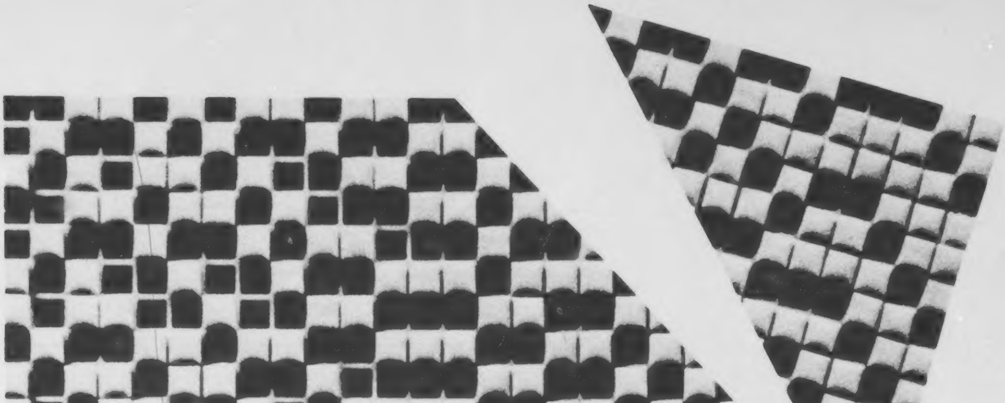
The text of *Going* contains three characters. This is the complete dialog:

> *I do think I'd better be going now because I...*
> *Oh, don't be so silly.*
> *Really, I must go.*
> *Tell her she ought to stay.*
> *Ahem.*
> *I do have to go now.*
> *You don't have to go.*
> *Are you sure?*
> *She doesn't have to go, does she?*
> *'Fraid so.*
> *I can't stand it.*
> *Tell me, does she have to go?*
> *I just think it's better to.*
> *Why do you have to go?*
> *If you must, you must.*
> *Good bye.*
> *Bye.*
> *Really.*
> *I can't stand it either.*
> *That's why I have to go.*
> *Do you think I ought to stay?*
> *Are you just afraid to tell me?*
> *Oh don't be so silly.*

However, these lines and the movements and gestures that relate to them are never given in the "correct" order. Various elements are instigated—presented by one actor for copying by others—at different points in the hour-long performance. Bits of dialog and action are added, and therefore repeated, as the performance progresses. The gestures are simple and few: waves, leaning on the table, turning to say goodbye, covering the mouth for an aside, and so on. Often actors remain motionless, frozen in position.

While some phrases and gestures are repeated from the beginning, the lines "I do think I'd better be going now because I...", "Really, I must go", "Tell her she ought to stay", "Are you sure?", "If you must, you must", and "Goodbye" are not heard for the first time until halfway through *Going;* "Ahem", "I have to go now", "Fraid so", "I just think it's better to", "Bye", and the last five lines of the text are heard for the first time in the last scene. *Going* feels like a puzzle, all the pieces of which are not immediately apparent. The actions seem to make sense but they are out of order, repeated many times, put together in strange ways. If the puzzle is to be solved, the solution lies in the mind of the spectator.

***Robb Creese** is a New York writer/director who is currently producing the first program ever designed exclusively for videodisc. His piece on Anthroposophical Performance appeared in T78.*



Structural Film: Ten Years Later

by Regina Cornwell

Is it a: 1) critical method, 2) an artistic process, 3) neither or 4) both?

> *We can in fact presume that there exist certain writers, painters, musicians in whose eyes a certain exercise of structure (and no longer merely its thought) represents a distinctive experience, and that both analysts and creators must be placed under the common sign of what we might call* structural man*, defined not by his ideas or his languages, but*

> *by his imagination—in other words, by the way in which he mentally experiences structure.*
>
> *...we recompose the object in order to make certain functions appear...this is why we must speak of the structuralist activity rather than the structuralist work.*
>
> (Roland Barthes "The Structuralist Activity", 1963)

The correct answer to the original question is—structuralism is both, as Barthes so succinctly states. But what of the phenomenon referred to as "structural film"? Is "structural film" "structuralist film" in disguise? In the middle of the 1960's in the avant-garde in this country, a number of films began to be produced that received the label "structural" as a way of distinguishing them from earlier as well as other contemporary avant-garde works. The films have provoked considerable dialog and debate over the years—so much so that at this stage it is not possible to refer to the works themselves without the context of criticism and metacriticism generated.

I. A Brief and Select Chronology—1963-1969

1963

Andy Warhol frequented the Film-Makers' Cinematheque in New York, where he became familiar with the works of Stan Brakhage and was influenced by Jack Smith, including his famed *Flaming Creatures*, 1963. Brakhage was completing Part II of his 75-minute mythopoeic film about the struggle of the artist, *Dog Star Man*, shot with a handheld camera and edited with layers of superimpositions, and also his 4-minute *Mothlight*, made sans camera and film, but with dissected moth pieces and foliage pressed onto thin, sprocketed, mylar tape. At the same time, Warhol began making his long, single-camera-position films in black and white without sound, such as *Sleep*, and *Empire* of the following year. They were in a vein diametrically opposed to the meticulous handmade techniques of Brakhage. Viewing a Brakhage projected next to a Warhol of this period would be very much analogous to looking at a Pollock or a DeKooning next to a Warhol silkscreen. A set of procedures is at work in the Warhol canvas and film wholly different from the gesturings of a Pollock in paint or Brakhage with film.

1964

Film Culture magazine gave its Sixth Independent Film Award to Andy Warhol for *Sleep, Haircut, Eat, Kiss* and *Empire*. In the award citation, Jonas Mekas predicted that radical changes would take place in the film avant-garde as a result of Warhol's work.

Post-1964

Who were those making films in the new post-Warhol scenario in the American avant-garde? Tony Conrad, Hollis Frampton, Ernie Gehr, Ken Jacobs, George Landow, Michael Snow and Joyce Wieland were all living in New York City in the middle of the 1960's, with Paul Sharits in the Midwest. Each made a number of films labeled "structural." There was never a movement, nor was there a school involving these individuals.

1965-66

George Landow made what is probably the first "structural film," *A Film In Which There Appear Sprocket Holes, Edge Lettering, Dirt Particles, Etc.*, a silent work of 4½ minutes. It is a loop-printed film. In the vein of Duchamp, it is both a found object and an assisted readymade. Landow took a piece of Kodak color-test footage, cut and manipulated it and had it printed so that the sprocket holes and

From *Eat* by Andy Warhol

edge letters are down the center of the film, and a blinking woman appears in four frames, in two on the right she is cropped in half, her face lining the right edge of the film and screen frame. Landow instructed the lab not to clean the film before printing it. Framing is emphasized by way of the frames within the frame. The looped repetitions flatten the image and they also take it out of time, objectifying it on the screen.

1966

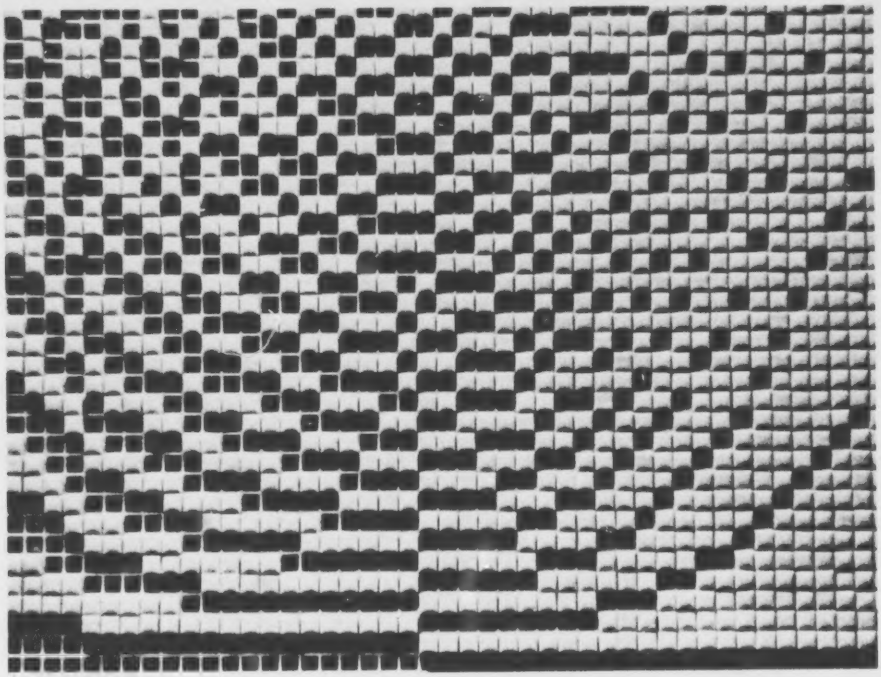
Tony Conrad made *The Flicker* and Paul Sharits *Ray Gun Virus, Word Movie/Fluxus 29,* and *Piece Mandala/End War,* all flicker films. They had not seen Peter Kubelka's flicker work, *Arnulf Rainer,* made in Vienna in 1958-1960, nor were they aware of each other's work when they completed their respective films the same year.

In submitting *Ray Gun Virus* to the selection jury for an international competition at Knokke-Le-Zoute in 1967, Sharits wrote: "At the risk of sounding immodest, by reexamining the basic mechanisms of motion pictures and by making these fundamentals explicitly concrete, I feel as though I am working toward a new conception of cinema."

This is precisely what occurs with the flicker film. The principle of flicker is indigenous to the operation of camera and projector. Film is actually composed of separate still frames projected at sixteen or twenty-four frames per second. But ordinarily one sees a constant image on the screen without interruption; one does not notice the separate frames because of the operations of the camera and projector coupled with the persistence of vision. Taking its cue from the shutter and the intermittent movement of camera and projector acting upon the strip of separate frames, the flicker film in its fashion emphasizes the nature of the separate frames, the rapid movement of the frames, and—through analogy and by way of hyperbole—the flicker effect of the shutter. The flicker film can be described phenomenologically as a short and very rapid succession of recurrent images that flutter or fluctuate in various structures throughout the work.

Each flicker film is manifestly different. It may consist purely of recurrent structures of solid black and white frames (as in Kubelka's *Arnulf Rainer* or Conrad's *The Flicker,*) or of structures of solid chromatic frames (as in Sharits's *Ray Gun Virus*) or of chromatic structures with referential imagery (as in Sharits's other flicker films, such as *Piece Mandala* or *T,O,U,C,H,I,N,G,* 1968). At the same time each concerns itself with certain of the same questions: about the single frame, film as a system of frames, the screen frame, modulations of space on the screen and in the room through the flicker effect, and the viewer's physiological interactions with the projected image.

Ray Gun Virus proceeds in gentle but complex color systems. Its track consists entirely of sprocket-hole sound, the sound of the film itself as it moves through the projector. Images appear on the screen, contingent upon the systems of color patterning and their durations. And, through afterimages, colors appear superimposed. Changes in hue create alterations in eye convergence for the viewer, and the screen seems to expand some of the time and to contract at others. At times, the color and light seem to extend out from the screen into the theatre space, creating a new space for the viewer. Also, by way of fades to black or abrupt flashes to white, the screen itself seems to be obliterated.



Exposure timing sheet from *The Flicker* by Tony Conrad

In contrast, Kubelka's *Arnulf Rainer* becomes an intense assault on the visual as well as the aural level, for its track consists of white sound which one hears as static. Conrad's *The Flicker* moves slowly and gradually into a succession of extremely violent and quick pulsations, which many viewers find impossible to focus upon because of the physiological discomfort. In both films, through their respective achromatic structuring, the viewer perceives colors through afterimages. And in each, the flat screen is at times bombarded with illusions of amorphous and even representational patterns.

1966-67

Michael Snow shot and completed *Wavelength* in New York City. At the urging of Jonas Mekas, he entered it in the Fourth International Experimental Film Competition at Knokke-Le-Zoute, in Winter 1967-68, where it took the Grand Prize. Already a classic, *Wavelength* is often referred to as the most important of the "structural films." Snow fixed his camera on a tripod, equipped it with a zoom lens and placed it at the end of an 80-foot loft. The zoom proceeds slowly forward for 45 minutes, going from its widest spatial field to its narrowest. The primary sound is a glissando sine wave that begins after about five minutes and continues to the finish. Events occur—the components of a simple, minimal narrative. Light changes that take place in and outside of the room, changes in color stock, flash frames, color filter and negative shots constantly alter the spatial perspective of the room for the viewer. These are variations along the slow continuum of the zoom shot as it shifts from deep space to more and more shallow space, finally ending on a photograph of the sea on the opposite, front, windowed wall. For a moment the horizon line of the seascape invites one's eyes out again into infinite space until the photograph is gradually taken out of focus into almost whiteness by the changed focus of the camera's lens. Through its film time on the zoom, *Wavelength* orchestrates the entire range of film space.

1968

Hollis Frampton made the 10-minute *Surface Tension*, an apt title for a film made in 1968 and an apt title for dealing with tensions generated out of forms of film convention. In three parts, the short work in an enigmatic fashion suggests beginning, middle and end, but as forms or structures with no causal and traditional linear relationships among them so that they cross-refer to each other and the devices of each create tensions within each. In a continuous take, in the first part a man is seen in fast motion at a digital clock with a phone ringing constantly. The man appears to be speaking but is not recorded on the soundtrack, while in the second section a camera continuously and systematically records, clicking off frames in stop motion, a walk from the Brooklyn Bridge to Central Park, drastically condensing time and space, while a voice-over is heard speaking in German. In the last, in a Magritte-like image, fish swim in a bowl before the ocean while titles tell amusing tales. The man, the voice and the tales are all linked and become the film's unification, one realizes, but the device is arbitrary, unmotivated, about the structure of the film and possible ways to organize, as feasible as the traditional unity through character or causality through beginning, middle and end of a narrative.

From *Wavelength* by Michael Snow

1969

Ernie Gehr made *Reverberation*, rephotographing 8mm film from a small screen onto 16mm film, and influenced Ken Jacobs in his technique for the making of *Tom,*

Tom the Piper's Son. It is a didactic homage to early film history, presenting the metamorphosis of the new out of the old.

Tom, Tom the Piper's Son is a film from 1905, directed and shot by Billy Bitzer, later famed as cameraman for D.W. Griffith. Jacobs makes a tryptic, with the original chase film version at beginning and end and his own rephotographed reexploration of the original, the long and extended piece in between. The original, filmed as a theatre production with each scene in long shot and single take, is dissected in both time and space. In the processes of refilming, Jacobs uses a coterie of other devices: medium and close-ups and extreme close-ups, slow motion, still or frozen-frame shots, reframings—which accentuate the film and screen frame—wipes, masks, flicker, winding of the frame line up and down, magnified film grain, dramatic shifts between deep and shallow space. At times Jacobs's version looks variously like a pointilist, a cubist or a futurist canvas or a photograph by Jules Marey. The materials for illusion-making in the original are used by Jacobs in his remake as means of dissection and transformation. When one sees it again at the end, Bitzer's short film inevitably looks different.

From *Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son* by Ken Jacobs

II. "Structural Film" as "Visionary Film"

We tend to operate and to position ourselves in terms of decades and five-year plans. By chance or coincidence, it is now just ten years since "Structural Film" was published by P. Adams Sitney in *Film Culture* (Summer, 1969) and subsequently appeared in two revised versions, *(Film Culture Revisited*, ed. Sitney, 1970) the last five years ago as the final chapter of his book, *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde*, and that same version this year in the book's second edition.

Over the past decade within the film avant-garde in North America and for slightly less time in Europe, especially England, the term "structural film" has had its currency or rather currencies—suggesting everything from its simple etymology of building and the process of building to Saussure and Levi-Strauss and the layers of Lacanian analysis and terminology, and something else—as we shall see. Much writing and filmmaking has centered around or been preoccupied with the term. Early on, films were discussed, even written about sight unseen, based on the definition appearing in *Film Culture*. The conundrums and confusions are extraordinary.

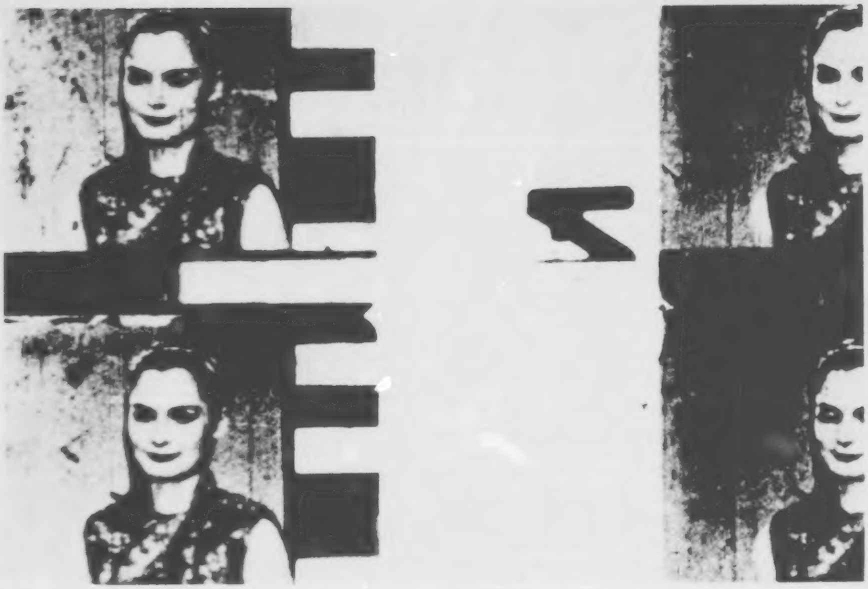
Why so much attention to this term? The question is a useful one from the hindsight of ten years or two five-year plans later. Looking back, in 1969 little criticism or even commentary was being written on the film avant-garde, and *Film Culture* was its main organ. So when something came out, one usually knew where to find it. When an essay attempted to define or label or describe or be polemical, it was seized upon. "Structural Film" was devoured among the practitioners and followers of the film avant-garde here and in Europe at a time when there was a growing body of new work but still with only negligible commentary and then perhaps on an individual work or filmmaker. There was nothing until the Sitney essay appeared which attempted to mark off a group of works as a whole, distinguishing it from others, or to claim a movement.

The background of players against which to place the new work, as Sitney sees it in his essay, are three Americans (two whose careers had begun in the 1940's—Kenneth Anger and Gregory Markopoulos—with Stan Brakhage, who started in the early 1950's) and a Viennese, Peter Kubelka, whose work came to be known in the U.S. in 1966-67. And, according to Sitney, following on this quartet, and in a very different vein, is the influence of Warhol.

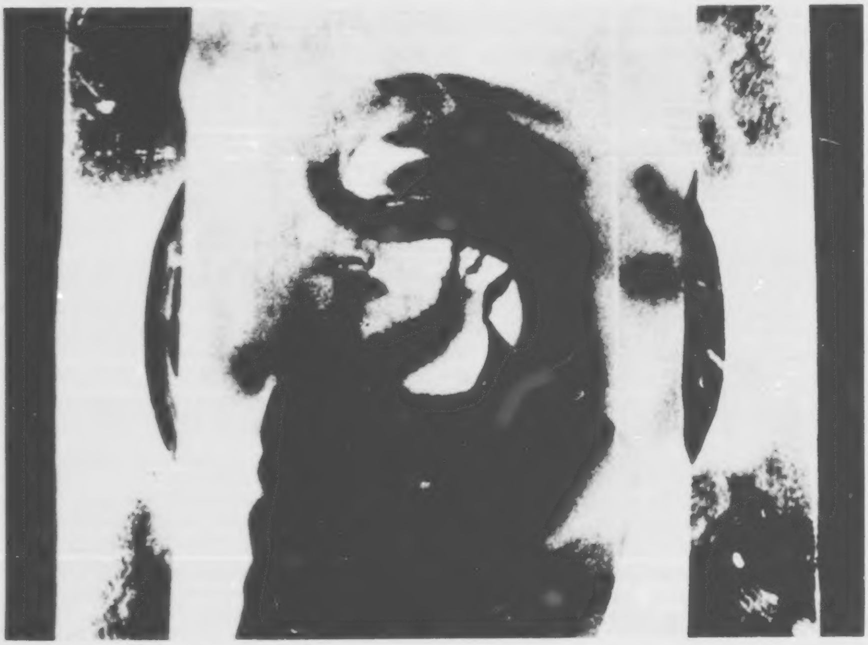
"Suddenly a cinema of structure has emerged. The dominant evolution of the American (and outlands') avant-garde cinema has been the pursuit of progressively complex forms; so this change of pace is unexpected and difficult to explain," is the opening line of Sitney's 1969 versions of "Structural Film." He identifies the cinema of "progressively complex forms" with the quartet, Anger, Markopoulos, Brakhage and Kubelka, those who practice a "cinematic language of conjunction" or a "cinema of metaphor," in contrast to those, already referred to above, who are working in this new direction. "Theirs is a cinema of structure wherein the shape of the whole film is predetermined and simplified, and it is that shape which is the primal impression of the film." And "the structural film insists on its shape and what content it has is minimal and subsidiary to the outline."

He gives four characteristics for such a work: "a fixed camera position (fixed from the viewer's perspective), the flicker effect, loop printing (the immediate repetition of shots exactly and without variation) and rephotography off of a screen." A work may have one or several of these but rarely all four and can even be structural, Sitney maintains, while lacking all of them.

Sitney contrasts structural with formal film. His description of formal is most unclear: "a tight nexus of content, a shape designed to explore the facets of the material....Recurrences, antithesis, and overall rhythm are the elements of the formal; in essence, a film whose content is, at root, a myth." But what are "a tight nexus of content, " a shape made "to explore the facets of the material," and "content" as "myth"? These terms neither explain nor define formal methods of art-making or criticism. While Sitney identifies *Arnulf Rainer* as a structural film, he sees the general direction of Kubelka's work as formal. And with Kubelka and



From *Film in Which There Appear Edge Lettering, Sprocket Holes, Dirt Particles, Etc.* by George Landow



From *(nostalgia)* by Hollis Frampton

Markopoulos and, for the most part, Brakhage and Anger, the shaping of their work usually occurs in the editing stages, in contrast to much of the new structural film he characterizes which is shaped prior to the shooting.

The title alone, "Structural Film," might lead one to assume that there is a connection with structuralism, whether linguistic or anthropological. But on reading the piece it is obvious that Sitney's critical and descriptive procedures and the way in which he defines this "other" cinema have nothing to do with structuralism as a method and discipline. In fact he totally disavows all such connections.

Moreover, his descriptions lack the rigor of structuralist method. Sitney sets structural over/against formal film in such a way that his very language seems not merely descriptive but also evaluative, because formal film is about the quest for "progressively complex form" fitting into the "dominant evolution of the American avant-garde" while structure is about "outline" and has "minimal content." It is useful to compare Sitney's above characterization of structure with that of form. Wouldn't his formal film's "tight nexus of content, a shape designed to explore the facets of the material....recurrences, antithesis..." seem to apply equally to his portrayal of structural film? So what is the difference between them? He ends the Postscript of his second version, referring to a work by Hollis Frampton: "With *Artificial Light*...he challenges the newest historical phase of the formal cinema, the structural cinema." So by now structural film is also formal. Not only is Sitney's description of formal unclear but so is that of structural, as the latter becomes a category of the former. By the time of the publication of his book, structural film is nothing but a continuation along the line of development of the romantic and the symbolist, of what he refers to as the visionary film of the American avant-garde. While acknowledging differences in their filmmaking approaches, through the three versions of his essay Sitney insists that the structural practitioners have a connection with their predecessors in terms of *"sensibility"* (italics his).

According to Sitney's thesis, following on the trance film, the mythopoeic, the picaresque and the lyric films which he describes and discusses in his book, *Visionary Film*, the structural film continues the "great unacknowledged aspiration of the American avant-garde film" which is "the cinematic reproduction of the human mind," a rather elusive phenomenological phrase left unclarified. But sensibility is the key that connects past with recent structural practitioners.

Moving from the inchoate signals of the lyric in Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid's *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943) through Brakhage and the development of the lyric film, Sitney uses Brakhage as a link with the structural filmmakers. He takes Brakhages's first person presence with his handheld and gesturing camera as an extension of his body and transfers the meaning of the perceptual operations of that sensibility to the four characteristics of the structural film. He claims that there is only a shift from sight and movement in perception to these "apperceptive strategies." "It is a cinema of the mind rather than the eye....The structural film is in part a synthesis of the formalistic graphic film/referring here to several of Kubelka's works as well as to the animation of Robert Breer/ and the Romantic lyrical film." But then at the head of the line of influence—and before Brakhage, Kubelka and Breer—he places Warhol as the structural film's major precursor. In the end, the structural film with its shape and outline constructed on one or several of the four devices described becomes a spatial metaphor for a concept and an intention that is equivalent to the shape created by Brakhage with his handheld camera and at his editing bench. There is no difference between them. It is a part of a romantic and symbolist sensibility. In the stages of revision of the "Structural Film" essay to the time of its arrival in *Visionary Film*, the films finally become transparencies through which to read the intentions and sensibilities of each of their makers, known as "Visionaries." This is all toward the construction of a grand myth about the unity of the American avant-garde film.

This is how the term "structural film" began critically and descriptively. As a whole, the label, the four technical characteristics, and the various film examples cited were accepted. Some took exception to the term and generally avoided using it. A few tried to focus on the implications of that body of work and its artistic and critical differences from past work. Several filmmakers stressed a relationship between theory and the new work, articulating a theory that had to do with their own practice.

III. Art as Research, Structure... and Reductivism

One of these filmmakers was Paul Sharits, included for his flicker films in the "Structural Film" category. In a paper first delivered in 1970 and published in 1972, "Words Per Page" (*Afterimage* [London] No. 4; *Film Culture*, No. 65-66 [1978]), he examines possible relationships between recent avant-garde film and information theory, communications theory, cybernetics and structuralism—or, as he put it, the then "current research methodologies" having to do with form, function and structure in general.

"Words Per Page" is an extremely articulate and dynamic essay, rife with ideas. Examining it from a history and distance of nine years, it now appears split into two distinct segments, its very "structure" of ideas ironically polarizing into positive and negative. It also becomes a useful vehicle through which to read developments in the new film.

Art-as-research is one of the principles and the motivating themes of Sharits's essay. This, it is important to stress, is quite the opposite of the visionary and romantic attitudes indicated in Sitney's "Structural Film." Intention or artist's intention in the vernacular way used by Sitney and connected with the "Intentional Fallacy" has absolutely no place here. Nor do purely intuitive, non or anti-intellectual, or emotive/expressive attitudes have a place here within an art-making and theory that promotes liaisons with the social and physical sciences.

Art-as-research means an openness to experiment. For Sharits, experiment suggests a move out of self and self-expression, a breaking with old ideas. In 1970 the research attitude was very much alive in the other visual arts. From EAT (Experiments in Art and Technology), the hopeful collaboration of artists and scientists in the early to middle 1960's, Minimal Art, Process and then Conceptual Art came ideas about form, definitions and redefinitions of art and about work procedures. As an ex-painter himself, trained in art history and criticism, Sharits was excited about ways of opening up and expanding conceptions of film. That film should be able to have "the maturity, rigor, and complexity of 'the other arts'" was a leading point in "Words Per Page," and looking for work procedures and critical methods to bring to bear from outside of the arts was another.

Self-definition, self-reference in art, conceptions of wholeness as opposed to organic unity, seriality, the object, the coexistence of object and process, and art as information are ideas that pepper the first half of Sharits's essay. Part of art-as-research is to discover and pose new questions in order to "expand the possibilities of 'the system' or medium." He dismisses as naive the all-too-tenacious stance that film must "lay bare, record and reveal reality" because of the "intrinsic realism" of the medium. His quest for expanded conceptions and formulations of film is an important one. But somehow the processes of inquiry, so optimistic and expansive at the start, become involuted and tautological by the end of the essay. He suggests structural linguistics as a possible model but uses it tentatively, sparingly and with caution. Taking an idea from Barthes' "The Structuralist Activity" and reworking it, Sharits offers a "mimeticism (by involution)" in which "the 'recoding' of the structure-process of recording can free cinema from referring to anything beyond itself; cinema can then *legitimately* become 'meaningless' *syntax*" (Sharits's italics).

Sharits rejects the shot in place of the single film frame as the smallest cinematic unit and then posits a "dualism" of frame and strip, both ordinarily invisible aspects of "normative cinema." In his concern for structure, he calls attention to this "dualism" in his flicker and then, later, his scratch, fade and grain or emulsion-study films, sometimes presented as gallery and museum installation works on several screens. He never wholesale rejects iconicity, but the focus becomes more and more film as self-definition, "meaningless syntax" generating information about itself in such a way that the cinematic process is the subject matter. Finally for Sharits the question becomes an ontological one and "What is cinema?" is answered in an increasingly reductivist fashion. The irreducible "being" of cinema is sought after—something fixed and forever unchanging, referring only to itself. More and more of the non-cinematic codes are eliminated in order to concentrate on the temporal flow of the strip of film and the composition of grain or emulsion in the frame . This dual structure i~~s made particularly evident in Sharit's~~ "Frozen Frames," in which he mounts an entire film strip by strip, between plexiglas and hangs it away from the wall, emphasizing both film as object as well as carefully organized structure. *Ray Gun Virus* and *T,O,U,C,H,I,N,G,* for instance, exist as "Frozen Frames" as well as projected films.

One can't ignore the tendency in the 1960's toward artistic self-examination. Clement Greenberg's questioning of what the irreducible properties of the medium of painting were was transferred by analogy to film. While he doesn't mention Greenberg, that same reductiveness is certainly present in Sharits's essay,even though he denies it and ends with: "Certainly an analysis of the focussing process itself is necessary; but 'focussing' does not necessarily mean 'reductiveness.' ...A focussed film frame is not a 'limit.'"

An extensive treatment of structural film occurred in England. Both films and ideas were picked up, discussed, promoted and written about, particularly by two filmmaker spokesmen, Peter Gidal and Malcolm LeGrice. In Gidal's vocabulary, by 1974 "Structural Film" became "Materialist/Structural" and "Structural/Materialist Film." (see: *Studio International*, Feb. 1974; *Structural Film Anthology*, ed. Peter Gidal). He made a political case for such film, with the English work distinguished from and held up as purer and more to the esthetic and political point than the American. Rather than its economic and social meaning in a political context, "materialist" is used by Gidal to mean physical attributes—the properties of a medium and the events of its making. In England "Expanded Cinema" works were promoted which included: performance cinema before a screen, accentuating light,

From *T,O,U,C,H,I,N,G,* by Paul Sharits

film strip and machinery; uses of multiple screens; and at times, no screens at all. Real time is stressed over illusory time in both "Expanded Cinema" and single screen works and Gidal is principally concerned with the latter. Gidal introduces Jaques Derrida into his arguments. In attempts to do away with illusionism an idea of presence is ushered in under a questionable Derridian label. For Gidal, presence involves process. A "stuctural/materialist film" is about its own making. Thus, viewing such a film is at once viewing a film and viewing the making of the film, i.e. the *system of consciousness* that produced the work " (Gidal's italics). Gidal's critical *apparti* is set up to escape from re-presentation and from illusion because he connects and equates both with narrative, which, for him, is "inherently authoritarian and manipulative, and therefore reactionary and detrimental to a (film) culture." "Aesthetics is ethics," Gidal writes. "Structural/Materialist Film" does not provide "entertainment through illusion" and refuses to be authoritarian but makes possible instead "a more aware consciousness." Each film is, he continues, "a form of consciousness and an independent work." One might recall Sitney's phenomenological framework for "structural film" as "visionary film." But Gidal's phenomenology, in contrast to Sitney's, has both a political and a moral tenor. In the end, like Sharits's, though articulated differently, Gidal's position is also reductivist.

IV. "Structuralist Activity" in Film

"Structural Film" as "Visionary Film"? Semantically the two do not exist happily together. Sitney refuses to see any break or rupture between the then-new "structural film" and the earlier work of the American avant-garde represented by Brakhage, Anger and others. Instead he absorbs and incorporates it in a linear and causal way as a continuity in sensibility and intention with the past. Such a reading blinds him to the radical implications of the work; the idea of a continuity misplaces the work and leads to misunderstanding of it. The term "structural film" has been obfuscated by the visionary point of view. Perhaps at this stage it is best to abandon it for another term. Maybe "structuralist" in the wide and expansive sense Barthes employs can be used instead.

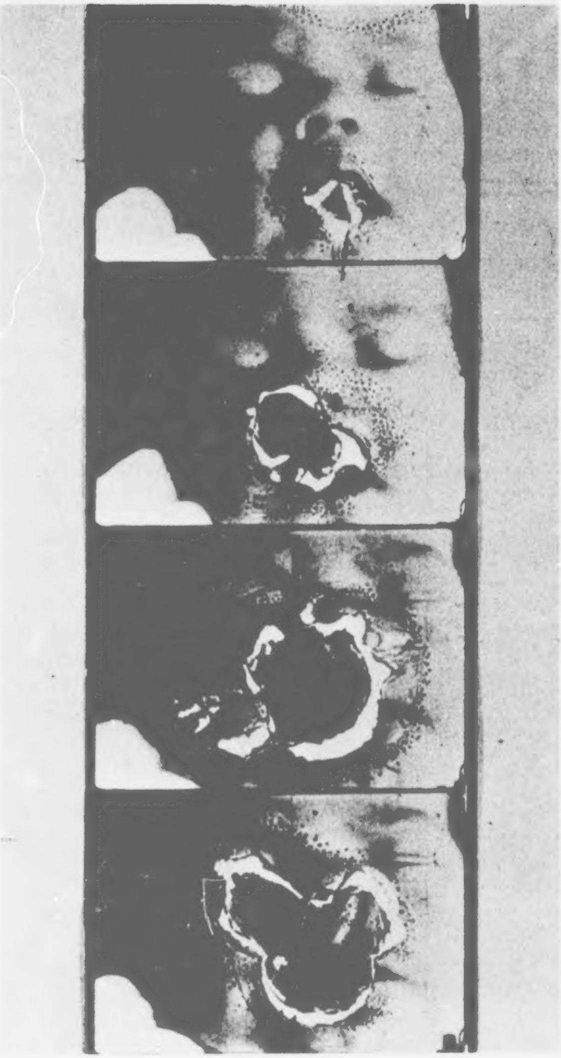
Art-as-research and the idea of structure do go hand in hand as Sharits in "Words Per Page" tries to describe both a film practice and a theory, rigorous and serious, removed from the romantic aspirations of an earlier time, and akin to developments in the other visual arts with analogies to the social sciences, including structuralist method. But on the other side, there is the reductivism present in Sharits's and Gidal's positions. That reductivism came out of a search for an ontology of film in the late 1960's and the early 1970's.

"Structuralist Film," if one wishes to use this term instead, is a cinema of exploration and analysis, often a didactic one commenting on earlier work and on other genres of film, foregrounding the past as in Jacobs's *Tom, Tom the Piper's Son* or suggesting a historical "fantasy" in Ernie Gehr's *History*, 1970, a film consisting of an oscillating field of film grain. Gehr's film provokes a musing on the very impossibility of the existence of a work such as it at any historically earlier time. It is a cinema in search of other ways of organizing its material, quite apart from narrative and from those options offered by earlier avant-garde works. Hand-in-hand with its non-and anti-narrative tendency is its general rejection of metaphor and symbol in place of an immediate experience of film as an object, whether it is composed of representational or of abstract imagery or moves between the two. Loop-printed and serial imagery, long camera takes on stationary objects or static scenes, simple bipolar or more complex mathematical orderings, are ways of stressing the object. Frequently there in the coexistence of object and process as in Snow's *Wavelength* or his ⟷, 1969, or in Sharits's *S:TREAM:S:S:ECTION:S:ECTION:S:ECTIONED*, 1970. It is a highly self-reflexive cinema in its explorations and processes, drawing attention to the materials of film and the viewer's relationships with them.

It is a cinema of relationships. A dynamic relationship exists between viewer and object or object-process. At its best it is a highly intellectual experience at the same time that it is perceptual and sensuous, and not—as it is sometimes characterized by its opponents—ascetic, puritanical and denying.

Today, in 1979, there seem to be two directions developing. One is a continuation of the concern for structure in formal work which uses the technical devices evolved over the past ten years for clearly narrative intentions. Such is the case with Manuel De Landa's *Itch, Scratch, Itch Cycle*, 1977, and his *Incontinence: A Diarrhetic Overflow of Mismatches*, 1978, and Martha Haslanger's *Frames, Cages and Speeches*, 1976. The other, taking shape over the last two years, is in large part a reaction to "structural" film. It is a film born of a Punk stance—whether one wants to call it an esthetic or an anti-esthetic is open to debate. As with American Punk music, this film often comes out of an art school and a New York art world ambiance. There is a strong Warhol influence present, the Warhol of the early films up to an including his *Chelsea Girls*. This work looks to popular culture for its sources and references rather than to what might be considered the high arts and esoteric culture. It eschews self-reference and has a crude and unpolished appearance which is purposely anti-formal and anti-intellectual.

While "Punk" film discards all formal concerns, even its focus on content is often minimal. There is a loose narrative present. One can see two tendencies in the



From *Dog Star Man* by Stan Brakhage

shaping of the films. On the one hand there is the desire to shock, meretriciously using movie conventions from the thriller and suspense and gangster film for the sake of gratuitous cruelty and violence as in Beth B and Scott B's *Black Box*, 1978. There is also a leveling off of action as in Eric Mitchell's *Red Italy*, 1978, in which everything has equal weight within the inchoate narrative and nothing means very much—a series of poses, reminiscenses of Warhol and his Factory Productions. So Warhol, having influenced the "structural" film, reappears again as a strong influence. But this time the emphasis is on a different part of his work and contribution—one diametrically opposite to that which helped shape the "structuralist" film.

Regina Cornwell writes criticism for *Artforum* and other periodicals. Her book, *The Films and Photographs of Michael Snow*, will be published this fall by Peter Martin Associates, Toronto.

Structuralist Film

by Michael Kirby

Many structuralist plays could be made quite directly into structuralist films. The time or durational structures of the live performances could simply be filmed, with or without the filter of changed camera angle and variation of frame size, to make a movie. Even the three-dimensional spatial structures important to most structuralist plays could be represented or "translated" in film. (For example, two alternating and interwoven stories separated spatially on stage could be distinguished in a film by using different color filters for each; spatial progressions could be translated into color progressions; etc.) Yet it would be impossible to make most structuralist films into live performances. Structuralist films tend to exploit the high degree of mechanical control inherent in the medium, a control that is not possible in live performance. Thus an analysis of selected films that may be called structuralist should tell us something about the media of film and theatre and about structuralism itself.

Like live performance, film may be analyzed in terms of both durational or time structures and in terms of non-durational structures of the present moment. Non-durational structures in theatre are both two-dimensional (the picture-frame stage) and three-dimensional, relating to both painting and sculpture. The fundamental two-dimensional character of the projected film image and its representation, rather than embodiment, of three-dimensional space relate it, of course, much more closely to the structural possibilities of painting. Two facts tend to modify this overly simple schematization: (1) even in painting, it takes time to "read" two-dimensional structure, and (2) durational and non-durational structures are reference points on a conceptual continuum rather than mutually exclusive categories; in film much more than in painting, there are structures that involve time to a limited extent and yet which may be considered most productively in terms of the present moment.

Clear examples of structuring of the present moment in film can be found in *Frame* and *Picking Up the Pieces* by Ken Kobland. The first section of *Picking Up the Pieces* (1978) is a sequence of 17 or 18 still color photographs, all taken in the same entrance hallway of an old but clean tenement building. No people are visible. The even intervals of the stairs, the patterns of the tile floor, the strip of molding halfway up the wall, the verticals of the walls that enclose the narrow space produce pictures with clear, precise lines and angles; all are similar, all have the same colors and forms, all are related to each other.

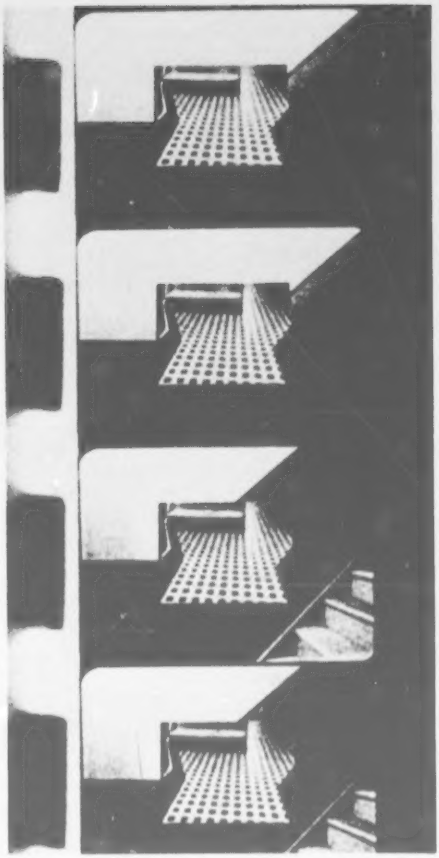
The second sequence begins with the same picture that began the first sequence. Now the rectangular center section seems to have been cut out and replaced: a line distinguishes the center from the rest of the picture. As the sequence continues, presenting the photographs fairly quickly in their previous order, this center section of the first picture appears in the center of each of the others. The colors and qualities of central and surrounding images are the same. The compositions are sometimes closely related, sometimes quite different.

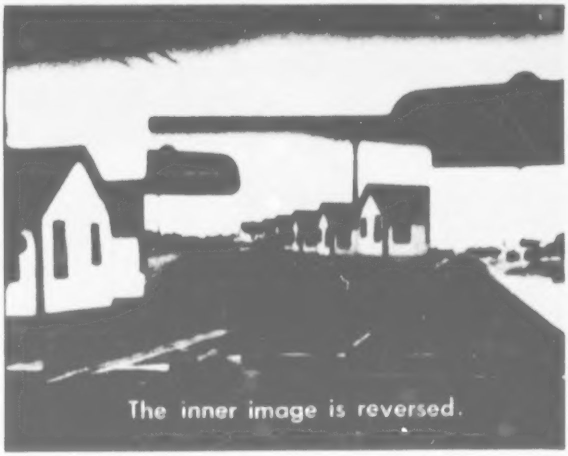
When the third sequence of *Picking Up the Pieces* begins, the rectangular center portion of one of the other pictures is seen briefly superimposed in the center of the first picture. In a moment, we find that it belongs to the second picture; it fits when it is presented there. Then it appears centered in order on each of the other pictures of the sequence.

This progression continues. The center rectangular position of each of the pictures appears centered in turn on each of the pictures in the sequence. Once in each repetition—when the center picture is superimposed on the picture from which it was taken—the overall picture is complete rather than contradictory. This format emphasizes the comparison of the part to the whole, the relationship—congruity, similarity or difference—between the central image and the surrounding image in a two-dimensional field. This is structure in the present moment.

However, the repetition of images and the orderly sequence also brings in the time dimension. We anticipate the length of each sequence. We begin to expect the moment when a central picture will become congruent. Since the order is always the same, we anticipate that when the center of the last picture in the series appears, the final sequence has begun; when it is superimposed on the last picture, making a complete image, the film will end. Thus, although two-dimensional structures are predominant, durational structures involving memory, expectancy, repetition, and patterning are also important.

Ken Kobland's films* Frame *(1977), below, and* Picking Up the Pieces *(1978), right.





Frame (1977), actually made by Kobland before *Picking Up the Pieces*, uses the same image-within-an-image format but with moving pictures. All of the footage for *Frame* was shot from inside a car moving along a road lined with beach cottages. The cottages are not occupied; no people can be seen. In some shots, the camera points straight ahead; in others, it is aimed directly to the left, where sand and water may be glimpsed behind the row of small wooden houses moving past. The film itself is composed of several sequences, in each of which one shot is inserted within another. In each, a rectangular picture having the same proportions as the main picture is placed in the center of the main picture. The larger motion picture makes a thick rectangular frame around the smaller picture in its center. Thus the "content" of *Frame* becomes the relationship—more or less in the present moment—between the two moving pictures. A subtitle printed on the film explains the relationship in each sequence between the frame picture and the picture in its center. The caption of the first sequence reads, "The inner image is delayed." In both shots, the camera is pointing through the front window of the moving car. In fact, there are not two different shots but one: the moving picture in the center is the same as that of the frame, but it is printed "out of sync." What we see first in the frame we see a moment later in the center. When, at the end of the shot, the frame goes black, the inner picture continues a moment longer. Other sequences present other relationships between the inner and outer pictures: the two images are simultaneous, the inner image precedes the outer one, one of the images is reversed, the inner shot is taken to the side and in the outer one the camera looks ahead, the outer moves at twice the speed of the inner and the cottages move in opposite directions, etc. In each of these relationships, the emphasis, as in *Picking Up the Pieces,* is on the relationship between parts of a two-dimensional field. The main structuring exists in the present moment.

In order to make the comparison as specific and accurate as possible, however, the mind/eye attempts to capture specific information from the flow of images through time—to establish particular, if fleeting, reference points and relationships in time in order to verify and perceptually establish the correspondences announced in the titles. (Absence of titles would not eliminate this type of structural activity; it would merely provoke a wider and more intense search for the nature of the visual comparison.) In the first sequence, for example, when the images are the same but the inner one precedes the outer, the spectator attempts to remember one particular house or detail and to recognize it again when it appears a moment later in the moving outer image. Because of the speed of the car, the plainness of the landscape, and the similarity of the beach cottages, this is not easy. Yet to the extent that it can be done, the precise time discrepancy between the images can be established intellectually. Thus relationships in time—fourth-dimensional structures—of a fixed and limited duration also become important in a film that uses a two-dimensional format and emphasizes structure in the present moment.

Time structures—memory and expectancy of a different type and of much longer duration—are dominant in Ken Jacobs' *The Doctor's Dream.* Indeed, Jacob's film, in emphasizing these structures for its own purposes, can be seen as demonstration of how memory and expectancy function in the traditional narrative movie. These are the first ten shots of *The Doctor's Dream:*

1. *Facing the camera, a middle-aged woman wearing a long dress stands on the porch of a wooden farmhouse. She looks worried as she takes down from the wall a horn made from a bull's horn and blows it.*
2. *Seated on a wagon filled with hay and pulled by two horses, a farmer and a young boy drive in from the right.*
3. *The woman we have seen on the porch is seated to the right of a young girl who is covered with blankets and obviously sick. The woman—we can assume this is the child's mother—is looking at a thermometer while she feels her daughter's forehead with the other hand.*
4. *The farmer and the boy—father and son—are seated on the wagon. "Carol Ann is worse," says the boy. "I know," his father answers, "Better get on Old Joe and ride for the doctor."*
5. *Extreme close-up of the thermometer: it reads 104.5 degrees.*
6. *The farmer and his son climb down from the wagon.*
7. *The mother takes the thermometer from the mouth of her daughter and looks at it.*
8. *The mother on the porch. She again blows the horn.*
9. *A desk with a microscope, books, etc. on it. Apparently it is a doctor's office in his house. An elderly man with a beard and wearing a dark suit—the doctor—steps in from the left and takes off his hat. A white-haired woman—his wife—appears. "Why, Jason!" she says, "What are you doing home...?" The*

doctor has "a lot of work to do," his wife can help him, and he sits behind the desk, facing the camera, peering into the microscope. He is searching for a vaccine of some sort.

10. *The farmer unhitches the harness that attaches the near horse to the wagon. He boosts his son onto the back of the horse. "Ride, boy, ride!"*

The acting, sets, lighting and camera work indicate professional studio production. The film—apart from its fictional setting before the First World War—does not seem completely contemporary. Even without previous information, one might deduce that Jacobs did not shoot the footage for *The Doctor's Dream*. But although the material of the film seems to be that of a traditional narrative with clear characters, obvious relationships, and a simple situation, the order of the shots does not follow the traditional order. Even without being told, one might guess that Jacobs was reordering the shots of a film made by someone else. (When *The Doctor's Dream* was shown in 1979 at The Collective in New York, an announcement was made before the screening that Jacobs had rearranged, according to a particular system, a film made by someone else and had used every shot from the "found" film in his own work. Although there would be no way of knowing, merely from viewing Jacobs' film, that he had used all of the shots, one might assume it, once the pattern of rearrangement was understood.)

At any rate, the spectators might begin, very early in their viewing, to realize that the story was being told in a discontinuous way. Every other shot seems to move the narrative forward. And although the intervening shots do not add to this narrative, they involve the same people. More significantly, the intervening shots precede the events of the forward-moving story. Finally, the spectator realizes that the shots being presented between the shots of the forward-moving story are moving backward—they are being presented in reverse order and each of these shots belongs before, rather than after, the shot before the last one. We are watching the same story going forward and backward in alternating shots at the same time. We can deduce that Jacobs began in the middle with his reordering and that the story will both begin and end at the end of the film.

This is exactly what Ken Jacobs did to make *The Doctor's Dream*. He began with a half-hour black-and-white narrative film made for television and re-edited it to make his own film.

The original film opens with a shot of a genre painting in which a bearded doctor sits pensively and watchfully at the side of a sick girl while her parents wait nearby. The filmed action begins with the doctor being awakened in the early morning by a knock at the door; he looks at his watch. The doctor visits a farm, advising a middle-aged woman to "keep him in bed" as much as possible and to let him (obviously her son, who has some sort of illness) play in the sun. Then the doctor visits another farm family—a father, mother, son and daughter—taking as a present for the young girl a calf that he has received in payment. "This cow," he says, "is Carol Ann's." Rain threatens, and the doctor stays with the family briefly, reading to the girl from *Beauty and the Beast* and telling her about gold at the ends of the rainbow that appears after the storm. The doctor leaves. On the porch of his home, the doctor removes a bandage from the arm of a boy who has been his patient. In the farm house, the young girl, apparently stricken with the same disease that is affecting her neighbor, collapses. Using a microscope, the doctor searches for a vaccine. The mother takes the daughter's temperature, realizes that she is very sick, and signals with a horn to her husband and son, who are just returning on their wagon from work.

Sequences from The Doctor's Dream *by Ken Jacobs*

The son rides off on one of the horses to get the doctor. The doctor, meanwhile, discovers a vaccine he thinks might work. At the farm, he administers it to the sick girl. He and the family wait. The son goes onto the porch, where it is raining, and prays. The doctor administers the vaccine again. The crisis passes. The father goes to tell his son; the mother does "not know how to thank" the doctor. Later, the young girl is recovering. The doctor, whom she has not seen in a while, arrives and tells her of going to the city, where he has apparently achieved some fame because of developing the vaccine. He gives the girl some jewelry and drives off in his carriage.

Jacobs' rearrangement begins with the middle two shots of the original film and works alternately backward and forward shot by shot. (Or one might say he began with the shot immediately before the exact middle of the original film and worked alternately forward and backward.) The new order is: the middle two shots, the shot that preceded them, the next shot after the middle ones, the second shot before the middle ones, the second shot after the middle ones, etc. Thus the middle ten shots of the original film, given in Jacobs' order above, were, in their original order:

1. *The doctor comes into his study and goes to work. (Shot number 9 in Jacobs' version.)*
2. *The mother takes the thermometer from her daughter's mouth and looks at it. (7)*
3. *The thermometer reads 104.5 degrees. (5)*
4. *Looking at the thermometer, the mother feels her daughter's forehead. (3)*
5. *On the porch, the woman blows a horn. (1)*
6. *The father and son arrive in the wagon. (2)*
7. *"Carol Ann is worse," says the son. The father tells the son he'd better ride for the doctor. (4)*
8. *They climb down from the wagon. (6)*
9. *The mother blows the horn again. (8)*
10. *The father helps his son onto the horse and the boy rides off. (10)*

Thus in Jacobs' version, the story folds back on itself. Shots of the doctor and the family waiting alternate with shots of the girl collapsing, the doctor removing the young boy's bandages, the doctor's discussion about the rainbow with the healthy young girl. A shot of the son on the porch in the rain is juxtaposed with one of the doctor with the calf. Recovering, unable to walk, Carol Ann sees the doctor in the forward-moving sequence, while in the reversed sequence she runs to greet him as he brings her the calf. The giving of the jewelry alternates with the doctor being awakened. The painting that opened the original film is the next to last shot in Jacobs' film; it is followed by the doctor's carriage driving away from the camera into the distance—the last shot in both films.

In watching the traditional narrative film, one forms certain expectations about what will be presented next. These expectations, which may be called structural because they involve the relationship between parts of the film, hold together by their presence extended sections of time and join one moment (when the expectancy is formed) with another (when the expectancy is either confirmed or denied). Some expectancies are about what will happen in the story: the son will reach the doctor in time, the doctor will discover a vaccine, Carol Ann will recover, etc. These narrative expectancies are of various durations. In *The Doctor's Dream*, it is not long before we realize the son has told the doctor of his sister's sickness, but waiting to discover the efficacy of the vaccine lasts much longer. Expectancies of the shortest duration involve the information to be conveyed in the following shot or shot sequence. If a person looks at a thermometer, we may expect to learn momentarily, either visually or audially, what the temperature is. If a horn is blown as a signal, we expect a response (although this response may, of course, not be forthcoming), and whoever appears next on the screen is at least tentatively identified as the recipient of the message. Thus the structure of a film that tells a story can be seen in part as a series of narrative expectancies of different lengths, sometimes "nested" or placed one-within-another.

However, expectancy in a narrative film involves not only what will happen but how the information will be presented. If someone looks at a thermometer they are holding, we may expect the next shot to be a close-up of the thermometer. If a just-awakened man—the doctor in the opening moments of the original *Doctor's Dream*—reaches for his watch, we might expect the next shot to be a close-up of the watch. We may expect a long shot of a wagon to be followed by a medium shot of its occupants, and so forth. The way of telling a story in film has its own logic that engenders certain expectancies about technique.

Many expectancies in film are conscious, and our savoring of them is part of the dramatic excitement, but many are non-conscious or preconscious. From our first film experience, we begin to establish both conscious and non-conscious mental systems for predicting accurately what will occur next. Certain bits of information, certain constellations of facts, about both storytelling and the use of the medium itself are taken as indicators of what the future will bring. Filmmakers, too, are ingrained with these systems and patterns of prediction; they use them in creating their films. Tradition implies shared standards and assumptions, and the more traditional the film narrative, the more expectancy will play a part if the spectator belongs to that tradition.

In *The Doctor's Dream*, Jacobs exploits, puts pressure upon, and brings to conscious awareness the traditional mechanisms of expectancy structure. Let us ignore, for the moment, the interspersed shots of the backward-moving half of the narrative. Intercut black leader would function to some extent in the same way. The forward-moving narrative is delayed, slowed; the time before expectancies are confirmed or denied is increased. Facts must be retained longer. The mind must carry and retain information and expectancies in an unusual, non-habitual, way. What was automatic and unconscious in the traditional arrangement of shots may now be forced into consciousness in an attempt to make sense out of the new, more-difficult, arrangement. It is not that structure did not exist in the traditional film, but the new, extended, version of that structure in the forward-moving portion of Jacobs' new film heightens it, makes it more intense. Attention is called to it, and it is made of primary esthetic importance.

Knowing that the next shot in the narrative sequence will not arrive immediately forces the mind to make conscious decisions and to consciously store information when it could ordinarily work on a more spontaneous and unconscious level. But, of course, the intervening segments in *The Doctor's Dream* are not black leader. They are shots involving the same characters and locations as the forward-moving narrative. They function, in part, as "static," making the selection and combination of information, the focussing and retention of expectancies that much more difficult. This, too, is apt to force the work to a conscious level, emphasizing dynamic structure rather than narrative content and meaning. Extension, stretching, and heightening of normal expectancies becomes an intellectual structural emotion in Jacobs' film.

The backward-moving half of the narrative achieves somewhat the same effect in a more complicated way. We have learned to predict what will follow the present moment we are watching in a film. We have not learned to predict what preceded it in an unknown past. All of our expectancy experience and habits of narration are aimed in one direction. When Jacobs forces us to ask, "What came before this shot, this scene?," rather than, "What will come after it?," the mechanisms of expectancy are again emphasized and made conscious. Although the same patterns of rearrangement—beginning in the middle and alternating forward-moving and backward-moving shot sequences—could be applied to any film, the effects would not necessarily be the same. A film without a clear, simple, story line—a travelog, say, or a poetic and impressionistic avant-garde piece—would not have the same dynamics, the same coherency, when rearranged. Length, too, would significantly effect the result, and if the halves of a feature-length film were intercut with each other, the resulting film might not have the clarity of Jacobs' *The Doctor's Dream*, which is based on a simple, obvious, compact narrative. By using and rearranging a half-hour film with many traditional literary/theatrical characteristics and intentions, Jacobs

demonstrates in *The Doctor's Dream* that a structuralist film is "about" structure itself, "about" certain workings of the spectator's mind. It is not about its subject matter, it is not an interpretation of life or a statement about the world, it does not convey a message, and so forth. Jacobs expects the disassembled parts of the original film to be reassembled in the mind of the spectator. It is this process, this activity, that is important rather than the story, characterization, and moralizing that still remain in traces from the original film. The original narrative is exploited for its structural possibilities and nothing else.

In Ken Kobland's *Frame* and *Picking Up the Pieces*, we can also see the nontraditional relation of structuralist thought to subject matter. Subject matter exists in Kobland's films. They are films *of* something; they are not totally abstract or nonobjective. Yet, like Jacobs' *The Doctor's Dream*, they do not comment upon the subject matter, send messages about or through it, or elucidate it in any way. The road lined with beach houses that appears in *Frame* was chosen for its formal characteristics. The road is straight and smooth, its image clarifying the orientation of the shots, and its surface providing even transit for the camera. The almost-identical beach houses lining the road at almost-equal intervals serve as markers, indicating by the rhythm of their passing the speed of the camera/car and decreasing the possibility of finding quickly recognizable reference points. The entranceway of the tenement in *Picking Up the Pieces* provides clear, distinct, geometric patterns with consistent color, texture, and characteristics. The films are not about a beach road or a tenement entranceway; they exploit the characteristics of these subjects to emphasize the structures of the films, the relationships to be perceived in the subject material.

The fact that certain spectators do not perceive the structures—do not perform the "suggested" mental activities—does not matter. All art is subjective. It lies, ultimately, in the personal experience of the observer. Therefore, no type or work of art receives the same response from everyone. The fact that some people see little or nothing in these structuralist films while others are very involved with them and deeply appreciate this involvement means nothing—other than being descriptive of the individual spectators. No artist, particulaly an innovative artist, can expect a universal response to his work.

The films of both Kobland and Jacobs make use of techniques inherent in the medium. They could not be transferred, other than in the most general way and with quite different esthetic results, into live performance. In part, *Frame* depends not merely on the comparison of one scene with a similar scene but on the comparison of a scene with itself. In part, it depends upon the mechanically controlled, exact

rate at which a scene is presented: one image moves twice as fast as another, etc. In part, the image is altered mechanically—i.e., it appears reversed, creating a comparison that shifts attention away from the similarity/dissimilarity of detail. None of these structural effects would be possible with the same precision working with live actors on stage. Of course, in attempting to emulate *The Doctor's Dream,* a one-act play or a scene done on stage could be cut in half, divided into units of some sort, and acted with forward-and backward-moving sequences alternated. Even if the technical problems of joining the units could be solved—blackouts between each unit, for example, replacing the film cuts and concealing the movement of the actors—an actor, even with extensive rehearsal, could not be expected to act an emotion backward. He could not cut off the character's emotion when one unit ended and then in a moment, present the feelings that preceded, led to, and developed into, those emotions. While many of the external details of the rearranged narrative could be presented, they would not approximate the effects obtained in cutting and editing film. It is in the area available only to film that the structural concerns of Jacobs and Kobland lie.

Structuralist films are quite different from what have been called "structural" films. Structural films emphasize the overall form, shape, outline or configuration, particularly through the use a single extended shot or a minimal number of shots. Structuralist films emphasize internal relationships, correspondences, and differences, usually in a complex way. Structural films call attention to qualities and properties of the film. Structuralist films call attention to the way the observer's mind works when viewing the film.

The fact that structuralist films involve both strictly calculated manipulations of their content and an emphasis upon the thought processes of the spectator have caused some critics to refer to them as "academic." This is intended negatively—referring, one supposes, to logical constructions and to the so-called ivory tower where ideas are detached from "the real world." Ignoring the value judgment as merely an attempt to objectify the critic's personal taste (after all, some also use "critic" as a perjorative term), one can see the basis for this distinction. In composition, structuralism does make use of logical thought. Some critics may prefer the illogicalities of intuition, inspiration, and personal idiosyncrasy—the traditional bases for creation. They are unable to recognize these factors when they appear—as they do—in structuralism. Traditionally, thinking is evaluated to a great extent by the "importance" and "relevance" of its subject matter. Structuralism detaches thought processes from the subject matter of that thought. Some critics do not want to think in new ways with new priorities; they do not realize that abstract thought—the solution of a pure problem in, say, geometry or algebra—can produce powerful positive feelings and even a sense of usefulness. The thing need not always precede the thought. If we think in new ways, we will develop new things.

The Mystery Plays of Michael Kirby

Notes on the Esthetics of Structuralist Theatre

by

Noel Carroll

As a sculptor, photographer, playwright and director, Michael Kirby has been and is still an articulate proponent of the interanimation of the arts. As a practitioner as well as a theoretician of several arts, he has made and defended work that not only mixes media but also transposes forms and preoccupations of one art to others. Kirby's commitment to the lively cross-fertilization of the arts partially accounts for the rise of Structuralist Theatre since that movement, in certain respects, appears to have been influenced in important ways by the tendency of Minimalist Art referred to as systemic painting.

Some of Kirby's Structuralist plays, like *Revolutionary Dance* and *Identity Control*, are composed of a series of dramatic, narrative vignettes that have no apparent causal or chronological relation. Kirby created his dramatic incidents as a painter might choose a color or shape, i.e., with an eye to its place in the overall formal structure. In *Revolutionary Dance*, there are eight scenes, each of which is of the type that might occur in a pulp novel or popular film about a rebellion or civil war. These scenes are preceded by a prelude of visual and aural snatches of the images and sounds to come, though at the outset of the play the audience is unaware that this is an overture. The eight scenes—which include a demolition mission, a roadblock and raising barricades—broadly "fit" together because they are of the same category in terms of content; i.e., standard motifs of one kind of fiction. This overall categorical correspondence, moreover, is enriched by the repetition of other elements from scene to scene including events (e.g., fights), gestures (e.g., a raised hand) and, especially, lines of dialog (e.g., "Somebody's coming," "Wait," "It's one of theirs," etc.). In *Revolutionary Dance*, the repetition of phrases even engenders a vague inkling of anticipation since we expect that no scene will conclude until most of the recurring words have been recited. *Identity Control* employs similar strategies, this time over materials culled from spy stories that are woven into a system of echoes by means of repeated gestures (e.g., eating), words (e.g., "they" referring to unknown, malevolent bosses), and themes (e.g., interrogations).

Kirby's use of a conspicuous structure of repetition aligns him with systemic painting. Where the systemic painter eschews mimesis, Kirby rejects diegesis as such. Both systemic painting and Structuralist Theatre present their audiences with holistic, readily perceptible structures in which a simple, overarching gestalt is apprehended with ease. That structure is then deepened and enriched through the play of comparison and contrast built out of the use of recurring motifs. For a painter like Kenneth Noland, those motifs may be shapes, like chevrons or parallelograms. For example, in Noland's *Par Transit,* there are six bands of color—shaped like parallelograms and running across a diamond-shaped canvas—beckoning the spectator to consider the differences in experiential effect caused when similar colors are juxtaposed (e.g., a red with a rust) versus when opposites (e.g., a red and a blue) are laid side by side. For Kirby, transposing the strategy to theatre, the duplicated motifs include narrative incidents, dialog, and other dramaturgic elements. Whereas in traditional mimetic painting and diegetic theatre structure is often latent, waiting to be teased out by the critic or connoisseur, in systemic painting and Structuralist Theatre, the basic formal unity of the work is immediately manifest.

By adopting the classical formula of Hutcheson, Kant and others—that a work of art strikes an equilibrium between unity and diversity—we can say that Kirby's approach, like that of the systemic painter, requires a shift in the traditional focus of esthetic attention. Instead of searching for unity amidst the diverse details and elements of a work, the spectator looks for diversity, *in the form of comparative and contrastive variations,* within the context of an easily comprehensible superstructure. In "Systemic Painting," Lawrence Alloway makes a point about One-Image Art that has direct bearing on Kirby's endeavor.

> *Here form becomes meaningful not because of ingenuity or suprise but because of repetition and extension. The recurrent image is subject to continuous transformation, destruction and reconstruction; it requires to be read in time as well as space. In style analysis we look for unity in variety; in One-Image Art we look for variety in conspicuous unity.* Lawrence Alloway, "Systemic Painting," in *Minimal Art, Gregory Battcock, ed. (New York: Dutton, 1968.)*

Kirby's proclivity for repetitive structures with variations was evident even before he began calling his theatre "Structuralist." *Hand Happening* is organized solely in terms of recurring images of hands. *Room 706* repeats the same event—an impromptu discussion of the production—on film, on tape and live, while *Expo Alogical* is primarily a series of variations on Act V, sc. vi of Webster's *The White Devil* in terms of the order in which the lines are declaimed and in terms of which actor, or combination of actors, recite them. In *Expo Alogical,* Michael Kirby's brother, E.T. Kirby, was a key performer. The likelihood that Michael Kirby is attracted to echo structures because he is a twin is very pronounced. However, the personal, psychological expressiveness of Kirby's duplication structures is less significant for his theatre than the way in which those structures prompt cognitive and perceptual play on the part of the spectator as he or she discovers comparative and contrastive correspondences and associations in the spectacle.

As a sculptor, Kirby often works with photographs arrayed on very symmetrical or geometrical supports that engender a similar variety of cognitive and perceptual play. Of "Window Piece" he writes in the *The Art of Time* that it contained

> *among other elements, a central square made of aluminum tubing; two similar bars of metal joining the four corners divided the interior of the square into four equal triangles. In one of the triangles a mirror was mounted so that it was slightly above eye level: the viewer did not see himself included in the reflection of the upper part of the room. In the next triangle was a "mirror photograph"—a photograph showing what would be reflected if a mirror filled the space. The other two triangles contained, respectively, clear glass through which one looked out the window and a photograph of the exterior view (the fire escape, trees, the neighboring apartment building) that one would see if the space were empty. Thus the central portion of the piece set up several comparisons involving interior or exterior space, distance, fixed images (the photographs) and changeable images (the mirror and clear glass).*

Though this sculpture does not resemble One-Image Art, it does traffic in the same sort of esthetic pleasure (comparative/contrastive play) within a strongly geometrical ("structural") framework.

Kirby's art, especially his variant of Structuralist Theatre, presupposes a very active, very participant spectator. A high degree of concentration is required from the audience whose memories are taxed to make correlations between recurring items while also discerning the shades of difference between them. The audience becomes immersed in a preoccupation with pattern rather than with the evolution of a comprehensible story. The non-diegetic development of something like *Revolutionary Dance* imbues it with the aura of a puzzle or a mystery where the type of cognitive play mobilized is concerned not only with initially intuiting the overall structure (which is not difficult) but later, and more importantly, in keeping track of the details, which flesh out the pattern with their many echoes (a process which becomes quite demanding). Considering the puzzle/mystery aspect of Kirby's theatre, it is significant that for three of his Structuralist plays *(Identity Control, Photoanalysis* and *Double Gothic)* dramatic motifs were garnered from popular genres involved with mystery, including spy stories, political intrigue and the gothic novel. Thus, the spectator is presented with puzzles or mysteries to be deciphered at the level of form, but also with literal mysteries that the make the degree of cognitive play involved even more intense than it might be otherwise.

Of Kirby's mystery tales, a distinction can be drawn between *Identity Control*, on the one hand, and *Photoanalysis* and *Double Gothic*, on the other. *Identity Control*, like *Revolutionary Dance*, comprises disconnected vignettes whereas *Photoanalysis* and *Double Gothic* contain discrete but alternating or parallel vignettes. The differences in the types of cognitive activity elicited by these distinct groups of plays are important. For the most part, *Revolutionary Dance* and *Identity Control* are directed at our memory while in *Photoanalysis* and *Double Gothic* the prospects for anticipation are made greater by suggesting at various points that the parallel vignettes may converge into one story. In this respect, *Photoanalysis* and *Double Gothic* elicit more protention rather than primarily retention from the spectator, who becomes a detective in the double sense not only of unraveling repetitive patterns as they develop but of projecting or predicting the outcomes of the action.

'In the country where we were—outside the city—cars are very important."

Photoanalysis is the earlier of the two plays. The performance space is defined by three screens that face the audience. There is a lectern in front of the center screen and there are seats before the screens on the right and left. A different presentation unfolds on each of these screens as slide projections flash by and actors at each of the screens speak. The center screen is devoted to a lecture on the "science of photoanalysis"—a hodgepodge of commonplaces that Kirby ironically parodies. On the left, a widow tells her story, recounting a tale about her husband Carl's suicide and her current friends along with worrisome suggestions here and there that Carl is not dead. On the right screen, another female persona, marked by colloquial diction, talks of her friendship with Amy, a native-born Cuban, whom the plot insinuates is involved in some covert, perhaps terrorist, political activity. In the story on the right, a character, suspiciously named Carlos, is assassinated. Throughout the play one speculates, detective-style, about the pros and cons of the possibility that Carlos *is* Carl, the alleged suicide on the left-hand screen.

Each of the three basic presentations alternate with one another. We see three slides of the photoanalysis lecture, followed by three from the left hand story and three from the right hand one. In all there are ten consecutive alternations of the three basic lines of development, concluding with a reprise of all the slides that have been projected. The overall structure of the play can be divined by the spectator by the second alternation; one easily realizes that the play is organized in sequential movements of threes (center, left, right). What remains, however, for the audience to discover is the dense infrastructure of correspondences, comparisons and contrasts between the alternating scenes. This density is exacerbated by the fact that the photos referred to by each of the three actors are virtually the same; i.e., they have the same models and are of the same places, varying only slightly in angle, lens, occasional detail, framing, distance and lighting. Though the photos in each section do differ from those in other sections from movement to movement, by the end of the play all of the sections have run through essentially the same repertory of photographic subjects.

The emphasis in the Kirby production of *Photoanalysis* is on the relation between the text and slide photos. The performers reciting the text are quite deadpan, affirming one of Yvonne Rainer's requisites for Minimalist performance. Like Rainer, Kirby uses non-expressiveness as a means of repudiating antecedent esthetic practices that valorized expressiveness. At the same time, however, the non-demonstrative acting also functions to force the spectator's attention away from the actor and toward the slide projections.

"Here we see two people taking something out of the trunk of a car."

". . . we stopped right across the street and Carlos came out to help us unload the few things that we had."

At one level, the play is an attack on the photoanalysis lecture. This pseudo-scientific homily declares that photoanalysis is based on the discovery that photos do not record the world but are the products of subjective decisions by photographers. Photoanalysis purportedly will help us recognize those choices in terms of composition, lighting, etc. and thereby enable us to "read" the subjectivity inscribed in the photo. But as the lesson continues we begin to note mistakes, equivocations and ellipses in it. For instance, in the last photo in the center section of the first movement, the figure is called a boy. This is wrong. It is a woman. Since her back is toward us, one might argue that the first time we see this photo, there could be some ambiguity, but in retrospect we know the figure is a woman because we become very familiar with this model in successive photos. The upshot of errors like this makes us realize that it is not, as the photoanalyst would have us believe, the subjectivity of the photographer that is the key to the meaning of a picture, but rather the meaning of the photo is a function of the context in which it is embedded. And, since roughly the same photos are being used thrice with different messages, we begin to appreciate that, like shots in cinematic montage, photos get their sense from what they are juxtaposed with. Kirby's use of recurring photos makes us notice how much of the actual information in a photo we overlook in order to make it fit the verbal "facts" of the story correlated with it. For example, more than once the narrators talk about a photo of a house (that at one point is identified as Amy's) as if we could clearly see people mulling about inside. At first we presume this description is accurate, but as the characters speak we realize that strain as we might there is no one visible in the house—neither upstairs or downstairs. Kirby underlines this lacuna by having the photoanalyst offer two fanciful readings, back to back, of what the imaginary people in the house are supposedly doing. The emphasis on the photos, which induces our scrutiny, leads us to see the discrepancies between the words and pictures that otherwise might go unnoticed. This, combined with structured repetition—of virtually the same photos in different contexts with totally different meanings—hammers home the theme that photos are polysemic while at the same time abetting incessant cognitive and perceptual play as we note the shifting variations in sense of the different photographic motifs from movement to movement.

Against the photoanalyst—who sees the significance of a photo as grounded in the photographer's subjectivity—Kirby implicitly develops the theme that the meaning of a photo is an interpretation based on its use. Kirby literalizes this notion in terms of the recurring motif of playing cards, which—as metaphors for photos—are treated alternately as cyphers of the future and as some sort of code among the political operatives. The ways that the same basic photo is viewed and scanned differently for details (and, in some sense, is seen as different) supplies the spectator with a great deal of comparative/contrastive food for thought.

Apart from the theme of interpretation, there are other dimensions of cognitive and perceptual involvement. We notice and attempt to recall specifically all the differences in the photos of the same locations and models, for though they are generally very similar, they are never exact facsimiles. At times we try to ascertain whether a photo is of a new place or of an old locale from a new angle. We speculate on whether certain photos are of places that are adjacent with the spaces of other photos. We attempt to decipher, in some cases, what is actually going on in the photos apart from the descriptions that accompany them. We also note recurring motifs in the narratives—e.g., wet shirts and barking dogs—as well as related images—e.g., clothes on a line—which endow the play with a rigorous pattern that we attempt to recognize—as we do in the perception of music—in every one of its refrains.

Double Gothic announces its basic structure in its title. Two different Gothic horror tales are set out side by side—a scene from one of the stories alternates with one from the other after the fashion of what is called cross-cutting in movie jargon. In each a woman arrives at a proverbial old dark house where she may become the victim of lesbian assault, mad scientific experimentation, occult rituals or worse. Unlike *Photoanalysis*, the two juxtaposed stories in *Double Gothic* are approximately the same; the effect of the parallel development is to emphasize typical features and accoutrements of the genre. The repetitions make some of the "invariant" elements of the Gothic stand out. In a manner of speaking, Kirby is exploiting the kind of insight found in Structuralist Vladimir Propp's classic *Morphology of the Folktale*, in which the essential ingredients of the Russian fairy tale were isolated in terms of their reappearance.

At the same time, some spectators report that they could also see the two stories converging—as if both were occurring in different parts of the same dark house. This gave them a strong sense of anticipation. I did not share this feeling of convergence, though I can see how it might be a very plausible way of looking at the play. Nevertheless, whether one hypothesizes convergence or not, *Double Gothic* engenders an extremely protentive awareness. One has a strong set of expectations, waiting for the basic elements of one scene to reappear in the next. At the same time, both stories build suspense—who are the denizens of the old dark house and what do they intend to do to their young visitors? Anticipation as a cognitive mode is more emphatic here than in *Identity Control* or *Revolutionary Dance* where none of the vignettes dramatically blossoms into its successors.

By juxtaposing two isomorphic stories, Kirby discriminates the fundamental units of the Gothic genre. But the interest in *Double Gothic* is not primarily with genre analysis. Instead Kirby uses our knowledge of genre motifs to evolve his own autonomous formal structures.

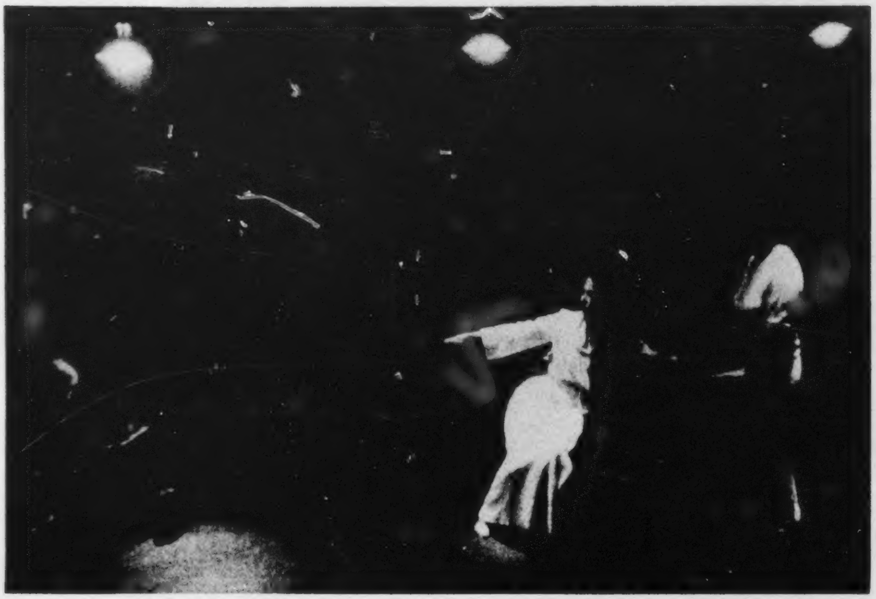
The audience is divided in half, each group sitting on opposite sides of the set in a way that prevents one group from seeing the other. The play is housed in a large black box with five corridors created by six longitudinal panels of black gauze. Each of the eight or nine scenes is played in a discrete corridor which is lit so that one really only sees the plane of the box where the actresses are moving. When the corridor is near your side of the box, you see the action clearly, but when a scene is played further away, the lighting, diffused by the walls of gauze, grows dim and the gestures appear obscure, swathed as if in a miasma where the vague, haunting blue-gray figures remind you of the conventional theatre and movie symbolism for dreamlikeness. The corresponding scenes in each of the tales are played on opposite corridors in the box, evolving an assertive formal contrast in terms of visual clarity versus obscurity. Also, corresponding scenes are arranged like mirror images—e.g., if a bed is on the left when one scene is near you, it will be on the right side when the complementary scene is played on the distant corridor.

Double Gothic, like *Revolutionary Dance*, begins with a prolepsis—a series of brief flashforwards of moments from actions that you are soon to see but which you can only identify as flashforwards in retrospect. Like *Photoanalysis*, *Double Gothic* concludes with an analepsis—flashbacks of gestures and postures seen earlier. We compare these two different groups of glimpses in terms of the contrasting experiences they provoke. At first the imagery is fugitive and enigmatic, hard to discern and to remember because it is bereft of context. After the two stories have been expounded, however, each pose is easily legible, sedimented with memories and associations and grounded in narrative meanings. The opening uncertainties, after the accumulated knowledge of the stories, dissolve into recognizability and certainty. Like the photos in *Photoanalysis*, Kirby's point with these abbreviated images is to draw attention to the way that an alteration in context causes a palpitation or shift in our consciousness of a situation, while also provoking such a palpitation.

Most of *Double Gothic* centers on the elaboration of the two tales of terror. In one, a woman's car breaks down on a desolate road. Another woman, a deaf mute, finds her, leading the ingenue to shelter—a mansion owned by a threatening older woman in a wheelchair. In the alternate tale, another young woman steps off a train and is greeted by a blind woman who directs her to an ominous, isolated sanitorium where an aggressive, ill-tempered woman doctor presides. The two stories are essentially equivalent. In both, after the young women reach their respective, old dark houses, they undress, sleep, cause arguments between seemingly handicapped assistants and their menacing matrons, are spied on through secret panels, are warned of imminent danger and finally investigate the grounds.

We note a multitude of correlations between the two tales. One ingenue hurts her foot, the other her eye. Rainstorms wrack both mansions. At the sanitorium, the young woman is told not to go downstairs, while the woman in the wheelchair warns the other ingenue not to go outside. In the final scene, one of the women carries an oil lamp while the other uses a candelabrum. The alternating structure directs our attention to these variations on themes, making their recognition, rather than emotional identification with the character's plight, the focus of our experience of the play. We often discover subtle, formal interrelations. For example, in the sanitorium, the ingenue looks into a mirror while in the complementary scene, the young woman examines a portrait of someone who resembles her. The simultaneous recognition of identity and difference as the recurring motifs undergo slight vicissitudes stimulates constant cognitive and perceptual play in a contemplative game of comparison and contrast. This game supplies *Double Gothic* with a temporal structure divorced from the cause and effect relations embodied in the narrative while not completely negating the pulse of the stories. Again, we become detectives in two senses—not only speculating on the mysteries of the old dark house but attempting to fill in all the corresponding linkages in the exfoliating, non-narrative pattern.

Kirby deploys space as forcefully as he shapes time. The tale at the mansion begins on the outside corridor of the eastern perimeter of the box while the first scene of the sanitorium story begins on the opposite, outside, western corridor. Each scene in each story occurs progressively deeper in the box, receding from one half of the audience while approaching the other. This blocking gives the production an easily intelligible pattern in space that is unconnected with the space of the



drama in any way. Indeed, this formal pattern even supercedes the plot in one sense, since we infer the encroachment of the ends of the Gothic tales because this system of spatial articulation has exhausted its possibilities rather than because either of the plots have climaxed. We never learn what happens to either of our heroines once they rush outside into the dark. But we do have a strong sense of formal closure in this movement of *Double Gothic* because what we apprehend as the formal law of the spatial design has progressed to its conclusion. Identifying this law and successfully predicting its evolution add another layer of cognitive involvement to *Double Gothic*—one that had not appeared in Kirby's earlier plays but whose salient symmetry reveals the close relationship between his theatre and his sculpture.

Kirby's approach to Structuralist Theatre employs the use of an initial, simple superstructure of organizing dramatic incidents in time and space, which is enriched by recurring motifs, cross associations and correspondences. These often complex internal relations are audited by the spectator in a ceaseless process of comparison and contrast as he or she discovers an elaborate, formal infrastructure of echoes and counterpoints. Within the basic straightforward structure, new structures emerge for the mind to play with. Memory and anticipation are actively exercised in a way that demands contemplative but participant spectatorship—to identify the root structure and to track its radiating correlations.

In certain respects, Kirby's theatre is reminiscent of the tendency in American avant-garde filmmaking called Structural Film where often, for example in Hollis Frampton's *Zorn's Lemma*, a similar, somewhat Kantian esthetic of phenomenological play is also encouraged. *Zorn's Lemma* is one of the classics of American Structual Film. It has a strongly marked, tripartite superstructure. But Kirby's reliance on narrative elements as the foundation units of his comparative/contrastive structures distinguish him from most ot these American cineastes. Nor is his work particularly analogous to that of British Structural-Materialist filmmakers like Malcolm LeGrice, who are concerned with narrative, because unlike LeGrice, Kirby is not involved with narrative "deconstruction."

Kirby's plays can be called self-referential in the sense that they are primarily hermetic or internally directed rather than being assertions of external truths about society or expressions of emotions. But they are not reflexive—i.e., revelatory of the conditions of their medium or of narrative—in the way that many of the works of American and British filmmakers who practice Structural filmmaking aspire to be.

Perhaps it is Kirby's involvement with mixed media art that accounts for his lack of interest in essaying a reflexive critique of theatre. In any case, because of his disinterest in reflexivity as well as his specific use of narrative elements, Kirby's Structuralist Theatre must be seen as a distant relation to, rather than as an outgrowth of, the various cinema Structuralisms. What can be said of all these phenomena is that they are all developments of Minimalism. In this respect, they each in turn presume an active audience as the *sine qua non* of their esthetic practice. Consequently, they fly in the face of one of the most influential esthetic jeremiads of the 60's—Michael Fried's "Art and Objecthood." For Fried, a truly modernist work is one in which the internal relation between the elements of an artwork should be complete unto itself—that is, the artwork should exist as a totalized entity independent of whether or not it has an audience. But in the cinema Structuralisms and in Kirby's theatre the opposite tack is espoused; for them, structure not only invites but presupposes the conscious, cognitive interaction of spectators as part and parcel of the kind of work they are.

***Noel Carroll** writes regularly on film for* Soho Weekly News; *his piece on Amy Taubin appeared in* T81.

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NEW BOOKS

Will It Make a Theatre by Eldon Elder with Marsha Imhof and Sharon Lee Ryder. New York: Off Off Broadway Theatre Alliance, 1979. Distributed by Drama Book Specialists) ix + 206 pp. (9" x 8½") Over 80 drawings by Eldon Elder; charts, sample forms. $6.95 (paperback).

Subtitled "A Guide to Finding, Renovating, Financing, Bringing Up-To-Code, the Non-Traditional Performance Space," this book, funded by grants from eleven different organizations, makes primary reference to New York City but would be useful, too, in other parts of the country. Its major sections are on "The Search for a Space" (including "What to Look For," "How to Find It," and "Evaluating a Space"), "How to Get It" (including "Negotiating for a Space" and information about funding and service organizations), "Design and Planning Strategies," and "Making It Legal," which deals with regulations and codes. There are profile histories of the physical development of Theatre Row, IRT (the Impossible Ragtime Theatre), and MTC (the Manhattan Theatre Club).

More Than Meat Joy by Carolee Schneemann. Edited by Bruce McPherson. New Paltz, New York: Documentext, 1979. (GPO Box 2012, New York, N.Y. 10001) 288 pp. (10¼" x 8½") more than 525 illustrations. $20 (hardcover).

Meat Joy is probably Carolee Schneemann's best-known performance. (It received two reviews in the same issue of *The Village Voice* when it was done at Judson Church in 1964.) That explains the title of this book. It is a documentation of all of Schneemann's performance works from *Glass Environment for Sound and Motion,* done at the Living Theatre in 1962, through such pieces as *Newspaper Event, Chromelodeon,* and *Lateral Splay,* all done with the Judson Dance Theatre in 1963, *Water Light / Water Needle* (St. Marks Church, 1966), and *Snows* (Martinique Theatre, 1967) to her most recent films and performance installations. Extensively illustrated, the book contains photographs of performances, snapshots of friends, reproductions of drawings and sketches, pictures of Schneemann's painting and constructions, etc. There are four sections of selections "From the Notebooks" of different periods. Appendices contain a selection of unperformed works, short appreciations by people ranging from Carl Andre to Heathcote Williams, a filmography and a bibliography.

Queer Theatre by Stefan Brecht. Frakfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1978. 178 pp. (4 3/4" x 7 13/16") 2 illus. DM 25 (paperback).

The second volume in Brecht's series on "The Original Theatre of the City of New York. From the Mid-60's to the Mid-70's," this book is shorter, less comprehensive, and more personal and anecdotal than his work on Wilson. It is an anthology of pieces on gay theatre artists such as Jack Smith, John Vaccaro, and Charles Ludlam. Smith is relatively unknown but important and influential. The descriptions of his presentations such as *Claptailism of Pamola Christmas Spectacle* (1971) and *The Secret of Rented Island* (1977, an extreme adaption of Ibsen's *Ghosts)* would, in themselves, give this book significance.

The Theatre of Visions: Robert Wilson by Stefan Brecht. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1978 441 pp. (4 3/4" x 7 13/16") 25 illus. DM 50 (paperback).

A long examination, in English although it is published in Germany, of Robert Wilson's work. The pages are standard paperback size, but the small margins, relatively small type (the type used for the extended footnotes is even smaller), and the above-average length of the book allow for an abundance of material. The major productions are described in detail, interpreted, and analyzed. Twenty-nine pages are devoted to the description of *Deafman Glance*, for example; there are 22 pages on its "Meaning" and 35 pages on its "Form." Most of the illustrations are diagrams and sketches. Brecht has interviewed many people (particularly about the early work), attended workshops and rehearsals, and performed in Wilson's presentations, and he is able to present material of several different kinds, including excerpts from the scripts. Appendices contain previously published statements by Wilson and reviews by Richard Foreman and Louis Aragon.

Dance Film Directory by John Mueller. U.S.A.: Princeton Book Company, 1979. 97 pp. (8½" x 11") 22 illus. $9.95 (paperback).

Subtitled "An Annotated and Evaluative Guide to Films on Ballet and Modern Dance," this book lists and briefly describes 303 films, including *The Red Shoes, Mary Wigman: Four Solos*, Schlemmer's *Triadische Ballett, Swan Lake* (four different versions), and Rene Clair's *Entr'acte*, which was screened between the acts of *Relache* by the Swedish Ballet. Rental prices from the various sources of the films are given. There are indices of the addresses of the film distributors, of choreographers, of dancers, and of the dances available on film (often more than one appears in a film).

L'imagier D'Erik Satie by Ornella Volta. Paris: Editions Francis Van de Velde, 1979. 124 pp. (8¼" x 11 5/8") 150 illus. (9 in color). 95 Francs (paperback).

In French. The catalog of a large Satie exhibition sponsored this year by the Paris Opera. A brief biography of Satie containing many illustrations, some relating to performances of which Satie composed the music: *Le Piège de Méduse* (for which he also wrote the book), *Parade, Mercure, Relâche*, etc. There is an index and a brief bibliography.

Grand Guignol by Francis Rivière and Gabrielle Wittkop. France: Editions Henri Veyrier, 1979. 141 pp. (7 5/8" x 9 11/16") 121 illus. 68 Francs (paperback).

In French. A profusely illustrated collection of short articles, most of them by one or the other of the two authors. There are pieces on "The Origin and Development of Dramatic Horror," "Naturalism and the Theatre of Horror," "Grand Guignol: Between *Savoir Faire* and Naivete," a short history of the Grand Guignol theatre, etc. A listing of "Classics of the Grand Guignol" contains 302 titles, sometimes with their casts but without dates. A filmography lists 12 films written by Andre de Lorde and 7 films based on his work. There is also a short bibliography.

The Floating Islands by Eugenio Barba. Edited by Ferdinando Taviani. Hostebro, Denmark: n.p., 1979. 240 pp. (4 7/8" x 8") 86 illus.

Twelve pieces by the director of the Odin Teatret: interviews, articles, letters, the narration for two documentary films, program notes, etc. (Three of the pieces have appeared in *The Drama Review.)* Each of the three sections—"Laboratory," "Training," and "Barter" (about the recent traveling to trade performances with peoples such as the Yanomani Indians in Venezuela—are introduced at some length by the editor, Taviani. An appendix contains short descriptions and notes of productions ranging from *Ornitofilene* and *Kaspariana* to the most recent work, *The Million—First Journey,* about Marco Polo.

Performance: Live Art 1909 to the Present by Roselee Goldberg. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1979. 128 pp. (8" x 11") 174 illus. $6.95 (paperback).

A brief history of avant-garde theatre from Italian Futurism to the present with chapters on Russian theatre (Futurism, Constructivism, spectacles, Blue Blouse, etc.), Dada, Surrealism, the Bauhaus, "American and European Performance from c. 1933" (Black Mountain College, John Cage, Happenings, new dance, etc.), and "Seventies Performance," primarily so-called "artists' performance" but with mention of Lucinda Childs, Foreman, Wilson, etc.) The large format allows for numerous illustrations, and the price is very reasonable. There is a bibliography.

The Theatre of Meyerhold by Edward Braun. London: Eyre Methuen, 1979. 299 pp. (6 1/8" x 9 1/8") 91 illus. $13.95 cloth; $10.00 paperback.

A decade ago, Edward Braun translated and edited a collection of Meyerhold's writing, published as *Meyerhold on Theatre.* His long historical introductions that placed each of the sections in context were an important part of the book. Now he has rewritten and expanded those introductions into a book-length study. Although other volumes on Meyearhold have appeared in the last few years, this new book should prove popular with the general reader and very useful for the scholar. Indexed, it has an extensive bibliography, almost all Russian titles.

Kandinsky in Munich: The Formative Jugendstil Years by Peg Weiss. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979. xxii + 362 pp. (8 3/8" x 8 11/16") 175 illus. (16 in color). $30 (hardcover).

Although very little of this book is devoted to theatre, it covers the period in which Kandinsky wrote *The Yellow Sound* and did his first non-objective painting. A chapter on Kandinsky and the munich Artists' Theatre of Georg Fuchs suggests that the play may have been written for that theatre. Those interested in the origins of abstract theatre and in the relationship of painting and performance will find this volume useful. There is a 28-page "Selected Bibliography."

Goethe and the Weimar Theatre by Marvin Carlson. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978. 326 pp. (5 7/8" x 8 15/16") 47 illus.

The gaps in our knowledge of the history of theatrical performance would seem to be apparent, but few scholars are working to fill them. Marvin Carlson is one of these. Although the fact that Goethe was a director as well as a playwright is generally known, it has been very difficult to find exact information in English on his staging and his work with actors. Now Carlson has written a detailed chronological study that provides us with documentation on all aspects of the Weimar theatre and makes clear Goethe's great importance for the history of directing. An appendix contains, unabridged, Goethe's "Rules for Actors" (1803). There is a bibliography and an index.

Theatre Lighting in the Age of Gas by Terence Rees. London: Society of Theatre Research, 1978. x + 238 pp. (6" x 9¼") 89 illus. £7.50.

Although limiting himself to the 19th century, Rees is able to discuss the use of candles and oil lamps and the early uses of electricity as well as the various types of lighting equipment—floats, lime-light, the magic lantern, the sun burner, etc.—and explains how they were deployed and employed on stage. It also touches upon scenographic techniques related to light: painted light, gauzes, etc. There is no bibliography, but numerous sources appear in the notes.

(The following four volumes belong to the théâtre années vingt *series edited by Denis Bablet and published in Switzerland. This series has no equivalent in English, either in intent or in scholarly importance. It includes, among others, the first two volumes on agit-prop (Russian performances; reported on in T76),* Le laboratoire Art et Action *by Michel Corvin (T71), and* Le Théâtre juif soviétique pendant les années vingt *on Granovski by Beatrice Picon-Vallin.)*

Le Théâtre d'Agit-Prop de 1917 a 1932 ed. by Denis Bablet. Lausanne: La Cite—L'Age d'Homme, 1978. *Tome III: 235 pp. (6 1/16" x 9 1/16") 28 illus. Tome IV: 239 pp.*

These two volumes are devoted to agit-prop theatre in Germany, France, Poland, Roumania, and the United States. Volume III contains contemporary articles. Eight, including pieces on scenography and on gesture and movement, are on agit-prop in Germany, where the greatest activity outside of Russia took place. Single articles deal with agit-prop in each of the other countries. Volume IV contains short statements, manifestos, and articles from the period and the scripts for agit-prop performances. There are eleven scripts from Germany (including *Russia's Day,* which was directed by Piscator and is discussed in Volume III), four scripts from France, five from Poland, and four (including *Scotsboro* and *The Fifteen-Minute Red Revue)* from the United States.

Theatre au Bauhaus by Eric Michaud. Lausanne: La Cite—L'Age d'Homme, n.d. 221 pp. (6 1/16" x 9 1/16") 56 illus.

A chronological discussion of theatre at the Bauhaus, based to a large extent on material available in English. Most useful, perhaps, is the section on "A Sacred Expressionism'," devoted to Lothar Schreyer, who is not well-known in this country. There is a chronology of "Theatre Projects and Realizations" and a 192-item bibliography, primarily in German and French.

Collage et montage au théâtre et dans les autres arts by Denis Bablet and 17 others. Lausanne: La Cite—L'Age d'Homme, 1978. 296 pp. (6 1/16" x 9 1/16") 73 illus.

The product of an international symposium, this book contains 18 articles, most but not all of them—as the title indicates—on theatre. There are two pieces on Eisenstein (a central figure in theatre and film monage); Alma Law writes on Meyerhold's *The Forest* production and gives a synopsis of the scenes. Among other, primarily theoretical, pieces, there are articles on German Dada theatre and on Piscator.

LIST OF BOOKS RECEIVED

HISTORY AND THEORY

Acting and the Stage by David Taylor. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1978 (paperback) $2.95.

Albert Maltz by Jack Salzman. Twayne Publishers, Boston, Mass., 1978 (hardcover) $9.95.

The Art of the Cinematographer: A Survey and Interview with Five Masters by Leonard Maltin. Dover Publications, New York, N.Y., 1978 (paperback) $5.

The Baroque: Literature and Culture in Seventeenth-Century Europe by Peter N. Skrine. Holmes & Meier Publishers, New York, N.Y., 1978 (hardcover).

Bertolt Brecht's Great Plays by Alfred D. White. Barnes & Noble Books, New York, N.Y., 1978 (hardcover) $22.50.

Body Wisdom: The Use and Training of the Human Body by Arthur Lessac. Drama Book Specialists, New York, N.Y., 1979 (paperback) $12.

Brecht (ou le soldat mort) by Guy Scarpetta. Bernard Grasset, Paris, France, 1979 (paperback).

British Drama by Allardyce Nicoll. Barnes & Noble Books, New York, N.Y., 1978 (hardcover) $26.50.

The Cajuns: From Acadia to Louisiana by William Faulkner Rushton. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York, N.Y., 1979 (hardcover) $15.95.

Comic Drama: The European Heritage, W.D. Howarth, ed. St. Martin's Press, New York, N.Y., 1978 (hardcover) $22.50.

Critical Analyses in English Renaissance Drama: A Bibliographic Guide by Brownell Salomon. Bowling Green University Popular Press, Bowling Green, Ohio, 1979 (paperback) $4.

Diaries 1920-1922 by Bertolt Brecht. Eyre Methuen, London, 1979 (hardcover) £6.50.

Dorothy Parker by Arthur F. Kinney. Twayne Publishers, Boston, Mass., 1978 (hardcover) $29.50.

Drama and Society, James Redmond, ed. Cambridge University Press, New York, N.Y., 1979 (hardcover) $29.50.

The Dramatic Imagination of W.B. Yeats by Andrew Parkin. Barnes and Noble Books, New York, N.Y., 1978 (hardcover) $23.50.

Durrenmatt: A Study of His Plays by Urs Jenny. Eyre Methuen, London, 1979 (hardcover) £5.95.

Enter Certain Players: Edwards-MacLiammoir and the Gate, 1928-1978, Peter Luke, ed. The Dolmen Press, Dublin, 1978 (hardcover) $21.50.

French Theatre Since 1830 by Sir Harold Hobson. John Calder Ltd., London, 1978 (paperback) £7.95.

The Great Lover: The Life and Art of Herbert Beerbohm Tree by Madeleine Bingham. Atheneum Publishers, New York, N.Y., 1979 (hardcover) $11.95.

Greek Tragedy in Action by Oliver Taplin. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif., 1978 (hardcover).

Hollywood Gold: The Award Winning Movies by Roy Pickard. Taplinger Publishing Co., New York, N.Y., 1977 (paperback) $9.95.

Homage to the Tragic Muse by Angelos Terzakis. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, Mass., 1978 (hardcover) $8.95.

Index to the London Stage, 1660-1800, Ben Ross Schneider Jr., ed. Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale and Edwardsville, Ill., 1978 (hardcover) $50.

International Theatre Yearbook '78. International Association of Theatre Critics, Warsaw, Poland, 1978 (paperback).

Imamu Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), Kimberly W. Benston, ed. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1978 (hardcover) $8.95.

Jean Giradoux by John H. Reilly. Twayne Publishers, Boston, Mass., 1978 (hardcover).

John Marston's Plays: Theme, Structure & Performance by Michael Scott. Barnes and Noble Books, New York, N.Y., 1978 (hardcover) $22.50.

Jule: The Story of Composer Jule Styne by Theodore Taylor. Random House, New York, N.Y., 1979 (hardcover) $10.95.

The Klan by Patsy Sims, Stein and Day, New York, N.Y., 1978 (hardcover) $12.50.

L'Agrupació Dramatica de Barcelona: Intent de Teatre Nacional (1955-1963) by Jordi Coco. Publicacions de L'Institut del Theatre, Barcelona, 1978 (paperback).

Landmarks of Shakespeare Criticism by Robert F. Willson Jr. Editions Rodopi N.V., Amsterdam, 1979 (paperback) $13.

Les Voies de la Création Théâtrale, Vol. 6. Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, 1978 (hardcover) 109 fr.

Le Théâtre Arabe de l'Absurde by Charib El-Khouri. Editions A-G Nizet, Paris, 1978 (paperback) 40 fr.

The Letters of Ruth Draper: A Self Portrait of a Great Actress, Neilla Warren, ed. Charles Scribners' Sons, New York, N.Y., 1979 (hardcover) $15.95.

The Lost Garden: A View of Shakespeare's English and Roman History Plays by John Wilders. Rowman and Littlefield, Totowa, N.J., 1978 (hardcover) $12.

L'univers du théâtre by Gilles Girard, Réal Ouellet and Claude Rigault. Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1978 (paperback).

Materialien zu Samuel Beckett "Warten auf Godot" by Herausgegeben von Hartmut Engelhardt and Dieter Mettler. Suhrkamp, Frankfut, 1979 (paperback).

More Black American Playwrights: A Bibliography by Esther Spring Arata. Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, N.J., and London, 1978 (hardcover) $13.50.

The Music of the Close: The Final Scenes of Shakespeare's Tragedies by Walter C. Foreman Jr. University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, Ky., 1978 (hardcover) $15.50.

The New Television: A Public/Private Art, Douglas Davis and Allison Simmons, ed. The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1978 (paperback) $6.95.

New York Theatre Annual, 1977-78, Vol. 2, Catharine Hughes, ed. Gale Research Co., Detroit, Mich., 1978 (hardcover) $20.

The 1930's: A Challenge to Orthodoxy, John Lucas, ed. Harvester Press Ltd., Sussex, England, 1978 (hardcover) $23.50.

Nosferatu the Vampyre by Paul Monette. Avon Books, New York, N.Y., 1979 (paperback) $2.25.

Pierrot: A Critical History of a Mask by Robert F. Storey. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1978 (hardcover) $14.95.

Poetic Drama & Poetic Theory, Dr. James Hogg, ed. Universitat Salzburg, Salzburg, Austria, 1978 (paperback).

Prefaces to Shakespeare, Vols, I and II by Harley Granville-Barker. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1978 (paperback) $5.95 each.

Realism in European Theatre and Drama, 1850-1920: A Bibliography by Robert D. Boyer. Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn., and London, 1979 (hardcover) $19.95.

The 'Revels' History of Drama in English, Vol. VII: 1880 to the Present Day by Hugh Hunt et. al. Methuen, New York, N.Y., 1979 (hardcover) $35.

"Romeo e Giulietta" L'Effabile by Romano Rutelli. Edizioni Il Formichiere, Milano, Italy, 1978 (paperback) Lire 6.000.

The Samuel Beckett Manuscripts: A Study by Richard L. Admussen. G.K. Hall & Co., Boston, Mass., 1978 (hardcover) $13.

Samuel Beckett: The Critical Heritage, Lawrence Graver and Raymond Federman, ed. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Henley and Boston, Mass., 1979 (hardcover) $21.50.

Sean O'Casey by James R. Scrimgeour. Twayne Publishers, Boston, Mass., 1979 (hardcover) $8.95.

Shakespeare: The Critical Heritage, Vol. 5, 1765-1774, Brian Vickers, ed. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Henley and Boston, Mass., 1979 (hardcover) $35.

The Story of Sadler's Wells, 1683-1977 by Dennis Arundell. Rowman and Littlefield, Totowa, N.J., 1978 (hardcover) $15.

Ten Modern Irish Playwrights: A Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography by Kimball King. Garland Publishing, New York, N.Y., and London, 1979 (hardcover) $18.

Theatre and Anti-Theatre: New Movements since Beckett by Ronald Hayman. Oxford University Press, New York, N.Y., 1979 (hardcover) $12.95.

Theatre Byways: Essays in Honor of Claude L. Shaver, C.J. Stevens and Joseph Aurbach, ed. Polyanthos, New Orleans, La., 1979 (hardcover) $17.50.

Theater in the Planned Society: Contemporary Drama in the German Democratic Republic in its Historical, Political and Cultural Context by H.G. Huettich. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, N.C., 1978 (hardcover).

The Victorian Theatre 1792-1914 by George Rowell. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1978 (hardcover) $26.

Who Was Who in the Theatre: 1912—1976, 4 Vols. Gale Research Co., Detroit, Mich., 1978 (hardcover) $140.

PLAYS

Apricots and Thermidor: Two Plays by Trevor Griffiths. Pluto Press Ltd., London, 1978 (paperback) £1.00.

Betrayal by Harold Pinter. Eyre Methuen, London, 1978 (hardcover) £3.50.

Big and Little by Botho Strauss. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York, N.Y., 1979 (paperback) $6.95.

Bubba by Sam Havens. I.E. Clark, Schulenburg, Tex., 1973 (paperback).

A Century of Plays by American Women, Rachel France, ed. Richards Rosen Press, New York, N.Y., 1979 (hardcover) $12.50. Includes: ***Criss-Cross*** by Rachel Crothers, ***How the Vote Was Won*** by Cicely Hamiton and Christopher St. John, ***The Mothers*** by Edith Ellis, ***The Outside*** by Susan Glaspell, ***Aftermath*** by Mary Burrill, ***Three from the Earth*** by Djuna Barnes, ***The Eldest*** by Edna Ferber, ***Plumes*** by Georgia Douglas Johnson, ***Winter's Night*** by Neith Boyce, ***Can You Hear Their Voices?*** by Hallie Flanagan and Margaret Ellen Clifford, ***Auf Wiedersehen*** by Sada Cowan, ***Journey for an Unknown Soldier*** by Doris Frankel, ***On the Way Home*** by Esther Hawley, ***The Mother of Us All*** by Gertrude Stein, ***Dope*** by Maryat Lee, ***A Trap Is a Small Place*** by Marjean Perry, ***Ex-Miss Copper Queen on a Set of Pills*** by Megan Terry, ***Skywriting*** by Rosalyn Drexler, ***Dr. Kheal*** by Maria Irene Fornes, ***Slam the Door Softly*** by Clare Boothe Luce, ***The Independent Female*** by Joan Holden, ***Lament for Three Women*** by Karen Malpede, ***Pimp*** by Martha Boesing.

Danton's Death by Georg Buchner. Eyre Methuen, London, 1968 (paperback) £1.95.

Fifteen Plays for Today's Teen-agers by John Murray Plays, Inc., Boston, Mass., 1979 (hardcover) $9.95.

Frozen Assets by Barrie Keeffe. Eyre Methuen, London, 1978 (paperback) £1.50.

The Fruits of Englightenment by Lev Tolstoy, Michael Frayn, tr. Eyre Methuen, London, 1979 (paperback) £2.25.

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The Glad Hand by Snoo Wilson. Pluto Press Ltd., London, 1979 (paperback) £1.95.

Has 'Washington' Legs? & Dingo by Charles Wood. Eyre Methuen, London, 1978 (paperback) £2.25.

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The Marowitz Shakespeare by Charles Marowitz. Drama Book Specialists, New York, N.Y., 1979 (paperback) $7.95.

Mary Barnes by David Edgar. Eyre Methuen, London, 1979 (paperback) £1.95.

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Twelve Hundred Hostages by Nicholas Wenckheim. Exposition Press, Hicksville, N.Y., 1979 (hardcover) $4.

Two Plays by Doric Wilson: A Perfect Relationship and The West Street Gang by Doric Wilson. SeaHorse Press, New York, N.Y., 1979 (paperback) $5.95.

The Wakefield Plays by Israel Horovitz. Avon Books, New York, N.Y., 1979 (paperback) $3.50.

Woyzeck by Georg Buchner. Eyre Methuen, London, 1979 (paperback) £1.95.

Structuralist Performance Issue

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